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ALTERNATIVE TO WAR

ANXIOUS discussion about the motives and "sincerity" of Stalin's answers to an American news agency's questions is really rather ridiculous. Of course, Stalin sincerely desires peace; so does Mr. Truman. Both would be mad if they did not. The question is not whether Russia is preparing an aggressive war (for which there is no evidence and which on the face of it is highly unlikely), but whether Stalin's declaration implies any hopeful change of Soviet tactics. In forming a judgment about this we have to take equally into account Moscow's latest violent diatribe against any association of Western Powers, the warning Note to Norway and also the conciliatory speeches of "Western" Communist leaders like Cachin and Togliatti.

No Socialist should ever cease to work for a One World organisation, which is almost inconceivable unless it is Socialist. Western Socialists, with a comparatively high standard of living and a bourgeois tradition of liberty, have so complex a path to follow that they sometimes forget their objective. The Kremlin never forgets its objective. But its tactics vary, because, as Stalin has said, there are ebbs and flows even within a revolutionary period. If Moscow has decided that Communist revolution cannot for the time go further in the West, Russia may be prepared, as she was when the revolutionary moment had passed after the first world war, to become more accommodating. If that is the present conclusion of the Kremlin, a more moderate Communist line in the West would be natural—especially if it is recognised that the violent abuse of all countries accepting Marshall Aid merely tends to bind them together. One would also expect Moscow to publish both a destructive analysis of Western Union and an invitation to discuss a peace pact.

No one can be sure that any such important change in tactics has been decided upon in Moscow. But, in framing a reply, Washington ought not to ignore the possibility. It is not enough for Mr. Truman to say that it is not his turn to go to Stalin; that Western statesmen have been to Moscow, Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam; that the democracies have become somewhat sceptical of the results of their leaders visiting dictators on their own home ground; and that Stalin will be welcome in Washington. (The trip would be very good for the Marshal, especially if he took some time off from official junketings to attend a few trade union meetings.) Nor is it enough for Mr. Acheson to urge that settlement is not only a two-nation affair, and that the usual diplomatic and Uno channels are open to Russia. Such scoring points are no substitute for a positive reply.

Another "peace pact" in general terms will mean nothing to anybody. An actual truce which brings fighting to an end or lessens tension anywhere would, on the other hand, bring new hope to the world. America's reply should, therefore, include a welcome to Stalin's message combined with an invitation to reduce the general to the particular. The first test should be readiness to reach an immediate peace settlement for Austria; unless agreement can be reached there, it can scarcely be useful to reopen the problem of Four-power co-operation in Germany, on which, probably more than on any other issue, the world's peace depends. But if there were an Austrian treaty, followed by a compromise in Greece and possibly a settlement in Korea, then a general "live and let live" settlement might become possible. Such a positive and practical reply must do good. If the Russian move is bluff, the bluff will be called. If it is not bluff, the first step to a *modus vivendi* which is, ultimately, the only alternative to war, will be achieved.

What Sort of Western Union?

Against this confused background of "noises off" from the U.S.S.R., Western Union is taking its place on the world stage. Contrary to expectation, the Foreign Ministers of the Brussels Powers succeeded last week in devising a formula which conceals, if it does not wholly resolve, Anglo-French differences about the political framework. The proposed Council of Ministers, meeting in secret, is to be supplemented by a Consultative Body, meeting publicly. This will not be, in practice, the fully fledged Assembly, the Parliament of Europe, which the French desired. Delegations will not necessarily be parliamentary, but may be Government nominees; and, though procedure (including the system of voting) remains to be worked out in detail, it is clear that the Council will in no sense be responsible to the *Corps Consultatif*. Its agenda will be prepared by the Council; it will seemingly be empowered to discuss only questions remitted to it by the Council; and, since Defence is expressly excluded from the purview, it will find difficulty in effectively debating foreign policy. Still, even in this modified form, the Consultative Body emerges as a focal point for the conception of Western European unity. "It moves . . ."

Or should we say, "Something moves"? The structure is now completed: there is machinery for joint Defence, Economic Co-operation and Political Consultation. The question is whether there is a common sense of purpose in the direction in which the machine is to move. In the field of Defence it is not sufficient to present to the United States a pooled indent for American armaments and money. What commitments are being undertaken, or will have to be undertaken to meet the demands of Congress? Is it solely against the possibility of Russian aggression in Europe that the Brussels Powers are arming? Would armed neutrality be their policy in the event of the Pacific becoming the theatre of war between the two Great Powers? Is Germany to contribute armed forces to the defence of Western Union? Do the subscribers, original or future, to the Brussels Pact accept any mutual liabilities in the case of colonial wars? To none of these questions have answers yet been given; but on the answers depend, not only the final reactions of the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe to Western Union, but the degree to which the whole conception appeals to the public in member States.

Similarly, it is difficult as yet to judge how far there is a genuine determination to reconcile, in the economic field, the competing interests of nations whose economics are, for the most part, not naturally complementary and range from "democratic planning" to extreme *laisser faire*. In last week's debate on the British Four-Year Plan and present methods of intra-European payments, the Chancellor was significantly silent

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about the chances of securing a co-ordinated Nineteen Nations' Plan; his main pre-occupation seemed to be to warn us that we might just attain solvency by 1953 if we worked hard and made some "massive assumptions"—such as the avoidance of a slump in the U.S.A., excessive expenditure on armaments, and continued inability to make ends meet in the rest of Europe. Are we, in fact, prepared to close down any section of British industry in order that a particular form of production may be concentrated economically in France? Would France reciprocate? Are Britain, France and Belgium ready to acquiesce in an expansion of German output and exports which promoted the global solvency of Western Europe but created unemployment—under the conditions of a predominantly capitalistic system —in Coventry, Charleroi or Lorraine? The complaints that Germany is already "dumping," with American approval and assistance, indicate how controversial this issue may become.

It is idle to suppose that Western Union, whether or not Italy and the Scandinavian countries join its ranks, is now firmly established and can be left to develop of its own momentum. Apart from the gaps to be bridged between the "functionalism" of Mr. Bevin and the "federalism" of, say, M. Reynaud, between the planning of Sir Stafford Cripps and the economic individualism of M. Spaak, there is a fundamental disagreement. Is Western Union to be the balancing Third Force in the world, determined—even at the cost of onerous Defence expenditure—to preserve its territorial, political and cultural independence? Or, as others hold, must the whole of Western Europe accept the fact that it can survive only as part of an Atlantic grouping dominated by the Western Hemisphere? Policies based on one assumption do not necessarily make sense in relation to the other.

Norway and Her Neighbours

The upshot of the series of inconclusive meetings between the three Scandinavian Prime Ministers is that the idea of a Nordic Defence Union is dead. Mindful of her close links with Finland and the consequent risks of taking any step which Moscow might regard as provocative, Sweden urged (very reasonably, in our view) that the aim of Nordic Union should be a "Swiss" neutrality. Denmark concurred—with the proviso that she hoped (optimistically and vainly) that deficiencies in the Scandinavian armaments industry might be made good by the U.S.A., even though the Union disclaimed external commitments inherent in full membership of the Atlantic Pact. Norway, whose economy is much more closely geared with the West, has decided to part company with her neighbours so far as foreign policy is concerned; she is now evidently ready to discard a "neutrality" whose feasibility she always doubted in favour of association with the Atlantic grouping. How far this decision will result in a serious deterioration of her relations with the U.S.S.R., with whom, it must be remembered, she has a common frontier, remains to be seen. The crux of the Russian Note promptly delivered in Oslo last week-end is the request for information whether Norway intends to permit the establishment of "foreign" military bases on Norwegian soil. Norway's reply is that there will be no such bases "as long as Norway is not attacked or subjected to threats."

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[illegible] alists [illegible] remain in De Gasperi's Coalition Government. The decision was obviously taken with grave misgivings. To Signor Saragat's argument that a small "Third Force" party must preserve, at least conditionally, an alliance with the Communists' only effective opponents, the Christian Democrats, several speakers retorted that the P.S.L.I. had failed, by adhering to the Coalition, to exercise any obvious restraint on the Government's reactionary policy, or to secure any economic or social reforms. Strong objections were also voiced against committing the party, as a member of the Coalition, to endorsement of Count Sforza's foreign policy. On no account, it was urged, should Italy join in a military Atlantic Pact until some substance "worth defending by Socialists" had been given to European unity. But against these arguments, which illustrate the dilemma facing Social-Democrats in more than one Continental country, the views of Signor Saragat prevailed. To leave the Government, he contended, would "place the party in a difficulty." The majority of his followers seem to have appreciated that, as an opposition, the party would have difficulty in competing against the big Communist battalions; and there was seemingly no disposition to work, or believe in the chances of, collaboration with the Nenni, "fusionist" group.

Unsettled Burma

When the Union of Burma was formed, adequate, even generous, arrangements were made to provide for the co-operation of the minorities, of which the 4,000,000 Karens are the largest. There were two Karen Ministers in the Thakin Nu Government. The Commander-in-Chief, who has just resigned, was a Karen. So, too, were many of his senior officers, and those of the Navy and the Air Force; indeed, about 47 per cent. of the Army consisted of Karens. Politically, the Karens were organised in the Karen National Union, which controlled the militant National Defence Organisation. In fact, the Government has given so much consideration to Karen claims that the loyal Kachins, Chins and especially the Shans, have criticised its toleration. Recently, however, the Government has been forced into taking a much stronger line against the Karens, whose revolt spreads over a wide area in the Delta. That it has been carefully organised, with a central leadership, is indicated by the planned infiltration of armed Karens into Rangoon. Communist cooperation is reflected in the demands of the Karen National Union. These demands included the recognition of a separate Karen State, and the grant of a general amnesty to all insurgents—including Karens, Communists and White-Band members of the People's Volunteer Organisation. The first demand was already the subject of a Boundary Commission, set up by the Government, with five Karens among its members. But before this Commission could report, the Karen rebellion had reached proportions which are a threat to the Government. On Tuesday, Thakin Nu declared that his Government was prepared to grant a separate State for the Karens, but that it was determined to prevent its secession, "even at the risk of civil war."

Dutch Failure in Indonesia

The Delhi Conference of nineteen nations called by Pandit Nehru to deal with the Indonesian problem ended by recommending to the Security Council the immediate release of the Republican leaders and the restoration of the interim Government at Jogjakarta. It also urged that territory seized by the Dutch in December should be restored, that the blockade should be immediately ended, and the date fixed for the withdrawal of Dutch troops. It suggested that elections to the Constituent Assembly be held by December 1st, and that the complete transfer of sovereignty to Indonesia be accomplished by January, 1950. These resolutions went farther than those of the Security Council of January 28th. They merely called for a cease-fire and the complete release of the Republican leaders, to whom sovereignty should be passed over not later than July 1st, 1950. Though the Indonesians are disappointed with the Security Council's resolutions, and are aware that, without full control of communications throughout all the Republican areas, they cannot enforce the observance of cease-fire, they are encouraged by the fact that the Dutch "police action" has failed. One result of its failure has been a switch in the attitude of the Dutch Labour Party, which is now severely attacking its Government's actions in Indonesia. The truth is that the Dutch Government gambled on quickly reducing the Republic to subservience. They are meeting with increased guerilla activity.

The Role of the Midwife

The report of the working party on midwives contains recommendations which are timely and sensible. There is little to be said in favour of the present tendency for the whole of ante-natal care to be taken over by general practitioners giving maternity service under Part IV of the Health Act—particularly since the lamentable failure to establish health centres has nullified the conception of an adequate supply of specially experienced G.P. obstetricians. The report rightly emphasises the importance of the part which the competent midwife should be able to play in "normal" pregnancies and deliveries if she is accorded by the medical profession the status of "fellow practitioner." This involves both some reform in midwifery training and, more important still, securing for midwives the pay and working conditions they deserve. Case-loads, to-day frequently excessive, must be reduced; remuneration and chances of advancement must be such as to check the drift into more profitable "private" nursing; the domiciliary midwife must be given a car and must be properly housed; above all, the midwife's standing in the public estimation must be raised by providing her with safe and effective means of applying analgesia. All these are recommendations calling urgently for administrative action. It is to be hoped, however, that due recognition of the role of the midwife will not lead to another equally vital need—the enlargement of the present hopelessly inadequate hospital accommodation for maternity cases—being obscured. There is, indeed, danger in emphasising the fact that, for healthy women, child-bearing its not a disease. True, it is a natural process; and, if there are no "complications," domiciliary deliveries are *medically* perhaps not open to serious objection. But before the conclusion is accepted that hospitalisation can properly be confined to abnormal cases or first pregnancies, full account must be given to the *social* consideration that, for all but a privileged wealthy class, confinements at home involve for the mother difficulties and stress of worry to which she should not be exposed.

Wages on the Farm

Another sizeable, perhaps decisive, hole has been made in the dykes protecting "stabilised personal incomes." The verdict of the independent members of the Agricultural Wages Board—given against the bloc vote of the farmers, but accepted as "half a loaf" by the N.U.A.W.—means that (with the increased overtime in a working week reduced from 48 to 47 hours), average weekly earnings of farm-workers will rise by about 6s. 6d. a week, and the industry's wage-bill by £10 millions a year. Few will dispute the Union's argument that the 90s. minimum rate (now to be raised by 4s.) was inadequate to maintain recruitment into an industry which is certainly under-manned if the increased production postulated in the Government's Four-Year Plan is to be achieved. Nor can the taxpayer legitimately complain if landowners and farmers, faced with the compulsion to sink many millions in the essential modernisation of buildings and equipment, press vigorously demands for an upward revision of selling prices—even if this involves increasing the £280 millions already being spent by the Treasury on subsidising home-produced food alone. The programme of agricultural expansion is vital to national survival, and it must be paid for. If, however, it is impossible to deny to labour on the land—with low rents and the advantages of the "kitchen plot" taken into account—the right to average earnings of at least £5 a week, then the case for substantial improvements in wages on the railways and in the cotton industry—both now under negotiation—becomes irresistible.

PARLIAMENT : Prophetic Planning

Wednesday

STAGGERING through the Lobby on Monday with the directory-thick, unexpurgated edition of the Lynskey Report (for which the public pays £2, and which M.P.s get free) a Member was asked, "What are you going to do with it?" "I'm going to sell it for thirty bob," he answered. Then recalling the danger of Lobby jokes, he mumbled something, and moved on quickly.

Since the Report was published, the general interest of Members has been less in its findings than in the code of conduct which the Belcher Debate might establish for the future. When, how, and in what conditions may a Member put forward the case of "interests" with which he is associated? Should there be a "No treating" rule for M.P.s? During a rather quiet Parliamentary week, they had the opportunity to ruminate on these questions. Many concluded that the only code necessary was, "Every man his own Tribunal."

The most notable ceremony of the week, seen for the first time in this Parliament, was the presentation of Private Members' Bills. Strangely enough, none of the Bills revealed the aura of crankiness that surrounds certain Members when they make their favourite speech on their special obsession. Even Follick's Spelling Reform Bill, greeted with the cheers appropriate for single-minded pertinacity, had the imposing support of Pitman, McAllister, Sir Patrick Hannon and John Haire among others.

This brief scene—so like Prize Day at School, with the Speaker as the Head—was an interlude in the Economic Debate, in which, as usual, Sir Stafford Cripps gave a clear exposition of the country's economic affairs. His case for the Four Year Plan was impeccable in logic, flawless in its conclusions, provided, of course, that its premises and suppositions were correct.

His report on economic progress condemned the defeatism of the Tories in the past, and vindicated a policy, which, however much it has been respected, has never been loved. But Cripps hasn't looked for facile popularity. To see a back without slapping it, to pass a fellow-Member in the Lobby without giving him the Constituency Smirk, to refuse to say the easy "Yes" when the answer should be "No"—that is virtue in a politician which Cripps has amply. When, therefore, at one point in the Debate he shook his head, and Eccles, who was speaking, told him not to "shake his halo," the laughter of the righteous and the unrighteous in the House wasn't ill-natured.

Yet between Cripps' optimism and the pessimism of some Tories, there were the intermediate doubts of speakers on both sides about some of the Plan's assumptions. Eccles, bland and reasonable, disarming in his moderation, was doubtful about the system of payments. How would the new debtors whom we intended to create pay for our goods? Hinchingbrooke asked justifiably whether all nineteen Marshall countries would become creditors; then who would be debtors—the Seven Seas?

Although the Tories didn't vote against the European Payments Bill, and gave no support to Pritt's Amendment, they reserved the right to criticise the methods of the Four Year Plan. As might have been expected in a debate of wide reference, there was some Party sandbagging—Smithers for the Tories making a familiarly sour speech, while Butler, in his otherwise valuable raking of the Four Year Plan, could not help emphasising Britain's dependence (he implied that it was the Socialist Government's dependence) on American Aid.

Macmillan and Harold Wilson, the winding-up speakers, were a contrast both in their manner and their subject. Macmillan shunned statistics. He barely touched on economics. Indeed, he is one of those who when they hear the word Communism, reach for their culture. But whatever he says, he is agreeable to listen to. Harold Wilson dealt with a lot of statistics. They were important, encouraging and a hopeful defiance of the Communist challenge. But they were hard to follow, and left unsatisfied those Members who had expected replies to the matters they had raised in the debate.

MAURICE EDELMAN

A HOUSE DIVIDED

As was to be expected, the General Council of the Trades Union Congress has endorsed the action of Mr. Arthur Deakin in breaking off relations with the Executive Bureau of the World Federation. There, for the moment, the matter rests. The General Council has referred to its International Committee the question of its future relations with trade union movements abroad; but though it has been accompanied in its withdrawal by the American Congress of Industrial Organisations and the Dutch Federation of Labour, there is no indication yet that it is intended to set up a rival body to the World Federation, in which the initiative is now left to the Communists, who have announced firmly that the organisation will carry on.

Does this pause by the T.U.C. imply hopes that the present breach in the labour front between East and West may rapidly be repaired? Such an assumption would seem precarious. Trade unions East and West of the Iron Curtain to-day represent widely divergent standpoints. In Eastern Europe they have become, in effect, auxiliary agencies of the Communist State, employed partly for the promotion of welfare and "culture," but chiefly for the mobilisation of the industrial front in the struggle for higher production as a means to defeat "Western Imperialism." In Western Europe, they have either rallied to the side of Governments which are parties to the Marshall Plan—thus limiting their economic demands in the interests of national recovery—or they have passed into an opposition which ranges them on the side of the Soviet Union even in contradiction with their members' economic interests. The rift, which reflects the political division of the world into two opposing groups—with a still inchoate Third Force in between—cannot readily be bridged.

Is it then desirable that the Western trade unions which have seceded from the World Federation should do nothing to counter the claim of the Communist-led rump that it is now the sole Labour International, the sole champion of the world's exploited masses against Anglo-American imperialist capitalism? The question looms large, and cannot ultimately be burked by the T.U.C. Nevertheless, in appraising the seceders' present cautious approach to the problem, it must be recognised that their tactical difficulties are serious. Apart from the fact that not a few British trade unionists may question whether the General Council had a completely clear mandate to quit the World Federation, there are the awkward considerations that the French and Italian trade union movements are still predominantly under Communist influence; that the Scandinavian unions still adhere to the W.F.T.U., and the attitude of the Latin-American unions has still to be defined; and that over great parts of Asia and Africa it is likely to be difficult to detach the loyalties of trade unions from the W.F.T.U. to a rival Western-based body.

An additional complication is the embarrassing attitude of the American Federation of Labour, which is now a potential associate of the seceders, and whose policy has long been to create an International not merely militantly anti-Communist but tending actively towards the defence of "free enterprise" against Socialism. No International based on the conceptions of the A.F. of L. could hope either to make any impression on the colonial and Asiatic unions, or even to rally the support of wavering trade unions in Scandinavia, Belgium or Switzerland. Even the British General Council, in its present mood of strong reaction against Communist "aggression," must realise that it could not carry its members with it in support of the sort of crusade advocated by the Right Wing of American labour, or with such allies as the A.F. of L.'s European ambassador, Mr. Irving Brown.

There is a further factor in the situation. The Trade Secretariats—that is, the separate international organisations of miners, transport workers and other occupational groups—remain in being independently of the W.F.T.U., and include in many cases unions from both sides of the dividing line between the Communist and non-Communist sections of the trade union movement. Their future is now uncertain; but it seems likely that some at least will insist on maintaining their unity. The British Mineworkers, for instance, or even Mr. Deakin's own Transport Workers may not wish to break off relations with their opposite numbers in the U.S.S.R., Poland or France, merely because the British T.U.C. and the Communists can no longer work together in the W.F.T.U. They might, indeed, deprecate any step which tended to make such meeting ground impossible. Furthermore, the trade union bodies which have left the World Federation will also have to consider on what terms they can secure, either independently or collectively, some form of recognition by the United Nations, in whose specialised agencies the W.F.T.U. has been accorded, and will presumably continue to claim recognition as the sole International representative of world labour.

In these difficult circumstances, it is understandable that the leaders of the T.U.C., C.I.O. and such other bodies as may join in secession from the W.F.T.U. should think twice before proceeding hastily to the creation of a rival International which would almost certainly be induced to make large concessions to the reactionary and incompatible standpoint of the A.F. of L., and whose establishment might strengthen, rather than weaken, Communist influence over large sections of organised labour both outside Europe and even in Western Europe itself. This, however, does not mean that the initiative should be wholly abandoned by the Western trade unions. In relation to Europe, there is the Trade Union Advisory Committee set up in connection with Marshall Aid. Although it includes only minority groups from France and Italy, this Committee forms a nucleus for a grouping of "middle-way" trade unions whose efforts—regardless of the standpoint of the A.F. of L., or even of the C.I.O.—should be to focus the views of organised Socialist labour on the planning which Western European Governments and the O.E.E.C. in Paris are undertaking on the basis of American aid. In this connection German wages form one obvious item for discussion. Similarly, outside Europe, the hopeful course would seem to lie, not in creating a fully-fledged rival International, but in concentrating on specific activities such as dealing with the problems of native labour arising from schemes, in which the U.S. is to play an increasing part, of colonial economic development.

As long as European colonial Powers are pursuing in South East Asia—to say nothing of the Middle East—policies which can only too easily be attacked as a continuation of capitalist imperialism, appeals to the trade unionists of Asiatic and colonial countries to rally to the ideological banner of Western labour in an anti-Communist crusade can hardly be expected to meet with much response. But in practical immediate issues affecting such areas there is clearly scope for useful concerted action by the British, the Dominion and the colonial trade union movements. If "Western" trade unionism is to have more than a strictly national appeal or influence, it will have to demonstrate its ability to reconcile the need to maintain and increase productivity in States which are still either predominantly capitalist or, at most, half-way towards a planned economy, with the steady pursuit of Socialist objectives at home and the welfare of workers in the less advanced countries abroad.

BELGIUM: TINSEL AND REALITY

THE Rue Royale was blocked by a double line of police. Every side-street leading towards the Parliament building was closed by a similar cordon. A troop of mounted gendarmes exercised its horses in a nearby park and, in the courtyard of the Foreign Ministry, there were strong reinforcements equipped with trucks and machine-guns. These precautions seemed adequate to cope with a putsch, let alone any fractious demonstrators from the column which shuffled peacefully through the streets of Brussels. I have never seen a more pacific procession than these ten thousand *sinistrés*—the people who lost their homes or their property during the war—who had come from all over Belgium to demand a more speedy settlement of their claims. They marched in silence, wending their way past the gleaming American cars and stores as full of luxuries as any on Fifth Avenue, only their banners proclaiming the destruction in the battle-areas and the failure of successive Belgian Governments to meet the cost of reconstruction.

These people have a real grievance. The treatment they have received reflects the whole spirit in which Belgian recovery has been carried out. There are well over half-a-million *sinistrés,* with claims that amount to perhaps 100 milliard Belgian francs. So far, they have received less than 3 milliard francs, while more than 14 milliards has been granted to war-damaged businesses. "Down with the Taxes," not "Up with the Houses," has been the policy. In 1945 there was talk of building 23,000 houses a year. Last year, only 5,000 were built, though there was no serious control of luxury construction. It is not a question of lack of resources or lack of need. There is unemployment in the brick industry and the building trades and, in 1945, the official estimate was that 55,000 houses were totally destroyed and 92,000 seriously damaged. Add to these figures more than 100,000 dwelling units which are real slums and the arrears of 112,000 units due to the suspension of building during the war: it is clear that housing should be a major problem for the Belgian Government. But, in a free economy, it seems that social needs get little priority; their place in the queue is fixed by the market.

The free market, indeed, has taken the place of Leopold as King of Belgium. Since it has been praised as the instrument of rapid economic recovery and the tinsel prosperity which for two years shimmered in the gloom of European austerity, it must also take the blame for the difficulties that now face Belgium. Certainly, the rapid elimination of controls, both internally and on foreign trade, paid handsome immediate dividends. Unlimited imports of food and clothing meant the end of all rationing; the Belgian consumer could buy anything from an American car to nylons and electric mixers. It seemed—to the Belgians and our Tories alike—that free enterprise really worked as the textbooks said.

They were wrong. Belgium gambled on free trade, and the gamble is ending in failure. At the end of last year, the number of unemployed increased rapidly. In the worst week of December, there were over 200,000 wholly without work, and 100,000 more on "partial relief." A small pro-[illegible] as undoubtedly seasonal; [illegible] *liers,* workers who crossed [illegible], who first had their real [illegible] evaluation of the French [illegible] then thrown out of work because France ran out of Belgian currency to pay them. But the majority of the unemployed are in industries producing consumer goods—textiles, glass, shoes and leather articles. There is still plenty of work in Wallonia, which depends on heavy industry, but in Flanders, where four-fifths of the unemployment is concentrated, *le chômage* is the staple topic of conversation. In Antwerp—the barometer of Belgian economy, unemployed dockers are less in evidence than one would expect, but statistics tell the story: 40 per cent. of the port's 17,000 registered dockers are on relief. Antwerp merchants complained bitterly to me about the diversion of the German traffic from the Scheldt to the Elbe by the Americans. Time after time, as I talked with unemployed workers, I was told it was all the fault of the Marshall Plan. They were not merely repeating what the Communists say; this is an argument that is coming increasingly from business circles as well. It is an easy answer to a very complex problem.

Belgium has at last, after enjoying the benefits of a "hard" currency, come to realise that her foreign trade policy has been self-defeating. Much of her dollar reserve was squandered on luxuries, some of which were resold for pounds, lire, guilder and other "soft" currencies, yielding a fat profit to the merchants concerned but eating up the credits on which Belgium's European customers could draw. At the same time, the imports of consumer goods created stiff competition for Belgian producers. Perhaps as much as two-thirds of Belgium's imports from the New World could have been secured elsewhere, produced at home or done without. To spend 458 million francs on nylons in 1947, over 250 millions on nylons and lingerie last year, and to buy shoes, tobacco, clothing, canned fruits and vegetables in large quantities from the U.S.A. was not the most simple way to reduce a dollar deficit that was 20 milliards in 1947 and more than 12 milliards in 1948, nor to protect domestic industry.

At first this did not seem to matter. But the trading surplus with other European countries steadily piled up. Belgium granted more credits: they were used to buy essentials such as steel and coal, coke and cement. Belgium had assumed that there would also be a demand—actually envisaged in her commercial treaties—for consumers' goods and semi-luxuries. As the supply of Belgian francs dwindled, so foreign customers restricted their buying to basic commodities. Unable to sell freely abroad, facing foreign competition and a contraction of the market at home, Belgium's light industries naturally had to cut back their output and unemployment followed.

This was poor national housekeeping, but it could only have been averted by pretty stiff controls. In their absence, Belgium could do little but accept passively the reduction in foreign buying. One alternative, a substantial drop in unnecessary imports, seemed out of the question once Belgium had pinned her hopes on maintaining a high level of trade. Austerity and multilateralism are incompatible bedfellows.

But when Belgium's place in the Marshall Plan was considered, both the Belgians and the Americans took this faith in free trade and a high standard of life at its face value. Belgium was allotted only 250 million dollars, of which 207 millions were to be used to provide credits under the Inter-European Payments Scheme. These credits, naturally, have been swallowed up as fast as they have become available. Today, Belgian politicians and business men will tell you that they should have received at least 400 million dollars, since the 43 millions of net aid to Belgium are wholly inadequate. They see other Marshall Plan countries putting American funds into the modernisation of their industry, creating potential competition for Belgium—which suffers from high production costs and increasingly obsolete equipment—while she herself cannot afford the capital investment required. This complaint is partly poppycock. There would be more reason for it if there were any sign that Belgium is prepared to find funds for domestic investment (less than 16 per cent. of the national income is so used) by cutting back consumption. That is the hard path of austerity her neighbours have chosen to follow. Belgium seems to want it both ways: to use American aid to support her boom and to re-equip her mines and factories. But as long as the only control that remains—apart from the freezing of the price of coal close to its very high production costs—is the limitation of wages, Belgium's case will not fall on sympathetic ears in Europe.

The crux of the matter is that Belgium has refused to become adjusted to the post-war world. Her reluctance to expand heavy industry, and to cut back the capacity to produce consumers' goods, stems from the memory of the Thirties, when the slump hit the steelworks and mines of Wallonia while Flemish light industry kept its head above water. Belgian bankers and businessmen do not want to be caught the same way again. Nor are they yet ready to accept the kind of planning which alone can make real European economic co-operation possible. Indeed, from the way some Belgians talk, it would seem that the sinister, austere hand of Sir Stafford Cripps moves the statistical pawns against them on the O.E.E.C. chessboard. Yet Belgium is not using its industrial resources to the full—an anomalous state of affairs which the Marshall Plan was in part designed to obviate. The problem created by the discrepancy between the British Four-Year Plan and the combined plans of Marshall Europe does not arise so much in the case of Belgium. There is a good market there for British goods in place of American—if they can be delivered, and if that is what the Americans want.

Up till now, it has been the Communists who have been calling for a re-orientation of Belgian trade but the idea of increased business with Russia and Eastern Europe has gained ground recently. One of the most distinguished converts to this cause is Admiral Kirk, the U.S. Ambassador. The Socialists, too, now want an improvement in economic relations with Eastern Europe. Nobody is quite sure what is to be bought or sold there, but the idea sounds good for a country which is just beginning to learn the hard facts of post-war life. Time is needed for the necessary adjustments. Few politicians will commit themselves just now, in case they should be saddled with responsibility for unpopular measures at the next elections. But Belgium has yet to learn that in an ocean of bilateralism a small ship captained by classical economists may have more difficulty than steered economies in reaching port. NORMAN MACKENZIE

ISRAEL'S BIG THREE

THE elections to the Israeli Constituent Assembly have brought the expected victory of Mapai (the Labour Party), whose Right-wing Social-democratic character is attested by its membership of Comisco. Mapam, its Left-wing rival, is a fusion of two splinter parties, with a vaguely anti-Western orientation and a strong hold in some of the finest collective settlements. Mapam polled rather less than was feared, and Heruth, the Fascist heir of Irgun, rather more. Mapai and Mapam together could form a Socialist Coalition firmly based on the Confederation of Labour. But personal rivalries make this very difficult; and the new Government—like its predecessor—will probably be forced to rely on a pact between Mapai and the Orthodox Jews, through which the latter will be able to impose some of their theocratic notions upon a people the vast majority of which is frankly agnostic.

The danger, however, that the infant State will be constricted by Talmudic swaddling clothes is decreased by the pre-eminent position of three men, all life-long Socialists and members of the trade union movement. Ben Gurion, Shertok and Kaplan will remain respectively Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary and Secretary of the Treasury, and this triumvirate will continue to dominate Israeli politics.

It was the war which gave Ben Gurion his present pre-eminent position. Though Weizmann remains indubitably the greatest living Jew, the foundation of his policy—a National Home based on Anglo-Jewish friendship—was shattered first by Neville Chamberlain and then by Ernest Bevin. The conflict with Britain is still for him an inexplicable disaster. As President, he has retired from practical politics, though his personal influence is still immense, not only among the Jews but with national leaders as diverse in character as Truman, Smuts, Nehru, Léon Blum and Winston Churchill. But the fulfilment of his life's work has passed to others. Ben Gurion, though a Russian Jew like Weizmann, is not a world statesman, but a product of the Palestinian Labour movement. It was his genius to foresee without flinching the conflict with Britain and the Arab States. A few days after he took over the Foreign Office, Ernest Bevin received a Jewish delegation of which Ben Gurion was a member. In the course of a typically lengthy speech, Ben Gurion reminded Bevin of his election pledges in respect to unlimited immigration. The Foreign Secretary cut him short, whereat Ben Gurion—a little, thick-set man, with white hair and hooded eyes—banged Ernest Bevin's own table and told him that the Palestine Jews would fight for their rights. The interview broke up in the worst of tempers, and Bevin said that he would never speak to that fellow again. Neither man has forgotten the conversation.

Right up to May 15, most of the Palestine Jews blindly refused to believe that Britain would really withdraw. They hoped against hope for "a political solution"; if Britain would not give them their rights, then America or Uno or Soviet Russia must make her do so. One man alone repeated: "the issue will be decided on the physical level." Ben Gurion knew that he must defeat Britain *and* the Arab armies. On May 14 he called in his Chief of Staff and learnt that he had at his disposal 1,200 rifles, a few mortars and a few hundred men; everything else was scattered about in local defence. Knowing that six Arab armies were already invading Palestine, and that the U.S. State Department had threatened to impose an arms embargo, Ben Gurion declared the independence of Israel during the first air raid on Tel Aviv. As he said to me the other day: "We had to fight our war of independence, and the only way to get an army was to become a State."

As a war leader Ben Gurion has proved himself to have all the qualities and most of the defects of Mr. Churchill. My impression, however, is that his ideas for the peace settlement are far more realistic than those of some of his less warlike colleagues. Since he never felt Weizmann's respect for British statesmanship, his resentment against Mr. Bevin is less intense. Always expecting war with the League, he does not rail against the Arabs for waging it. He has a mystical belief in neutrality, not merely as a Jewish policy but as the basis for Israeli-Arab friendship; and I think he would be ready to accept a Great Power guarantee of the frontiers both of Israel and Transjordan, since he believes that, if both were neutralised, Jew and Arab could work together undisturbed by military entanglements.

The second member of the triumvirate is Shertok. He is Palestinian-born; indeed, he was brought up in an Arab village and his Arabic is better than his excellent English and French. Small, with a large, bushy moustache and gentle eyes, it is easy to dismiss him as fussy and long-winded. But he is probably the best administrator in the Cabinet, and his opponents at Uno have learnt the danger of under-rating his negotiating skill. It was this diplomacy which "covered" the second Negev offensive without openly flouting the Security Council. Now he will face the detailed decisions in the armistice and peace talks.

Shertok's frontier claims will, of course, be put very high for bargaining reasons. He will argue that the Arab States, having repudiated the Uno partition plan and put the issue to the arbitrament of war, cannot expect, when defeated, to fall fall back on the frontiers of the November 29 Resolution. The two issues on which he will be adamant are the retention of the Negev—including the five miles on the Gulf of Ajaba—and the inclusion inside Israel of New Jerusalem and the corridor which joins it to the coastal plain. He would like to see the old city internationalised, but might possibly accept in the last resort a plan which made it Abdullah's capital.

All these frontier questions, however, can only be sensibly discussed in the wider framework of Israel's relations with her neighbours. If Transjordan remains a British puppet State and military base, and Abdullah acquires the Arab areas of Palestine, Shertok will certainly fight to hold all the territory now occupied by Israeli armies. But if Britain were to favour the neutralisation of Israel and Transjordan, the frontier question would recede into the background. Moreover, the tragic problem of the Arab refugees would then be relatively easy to solve by a great scheme of irrigation and resettlement, east of the Jordan, to which Israel would contribute not merely money but labour and technical "know-how." Shertok realises that Israeli prosperity depends on coming to terms with the Arabs of the Fertile Crescent, particularly Lebanon and Syria, and in proving to them that an independent Israel can assist them to make their Crescent really fertile.

As Secretary of the Treasury, Kaplan will have the most difficult task. A Russian by origin, and for years the cautious Treasurer of the Confederation of Labour, he is faced with a raging inflation, which began when price controls broke down, along with the rest of the Administration, in the last months of the Mandate. This inflation has been checked, but by no means halted, by an internal loan and special war taxation. Kaplan's difficulties at the Treasury have been greatly increased by the strong position of the trade unions; and so far—possibly because of the imminence of the election—he has shown himself more of a Dalton than a Cripps. The citrus growers assured me that it was not only the flight of the Arabs and the call-up which caused hundreds of acres of oranges and grapefruit to remain unpicked. With a wage of £1 15s. 0d. a day for unskilled Arab or Jewish labour in the groves, it just does not pay to pick and pack the fruit. The cost of building labour is said to be equally exorbitant. It is hoped that the stream of new immigrants—240,000 are due in 1949—will help to check the vicious spiral; but by itself this will not be sufficient. What is needed is an appreciation by the trade unions that, in the period of capital development ahead, labour, although it has all the bargaining power, must exercise restraint.

At present Israel still lives in an unreal war boom. Exports of potash have stopped altogether, and citrus shipments are only just being resumed. A people of some 750,000 maintained until recently an army of 140,000, although demobilisation has now begun. It was the realisation that it was impossible to maintain war expenditure on this scale for an extended period which drove Israel to force the issue by its military offensives in Galilee and the Negev. As her enemies well knew, a quick decision in the war was essential to prevent her slow strangulation.

What are the prospects now that the war is over and the elections won? First, Kaplan plans to impose austerity on the British model, and he has already cut down imports of all but the barest essentials. In the second place, he intends to encourage, by the offer of special inducements, the import of foreign capital; he hopes that it will flow in at the rate of £100 million a year. Palestine, unlike Britain, is a new country, and Kaplan, though a Socialist, believes that industrial development can only be done quickly on the basis of free enterprise. A pioneering boom may help to check inflation, and the socialisation of industry must be postponed till the plant is there. On the other hand, agriculture will be increasingly in the hands of the collectives and co-operatives, and vacant Arab lands are already being allotted to the Kibbutzim for rapid development. In the Negev, also, development will be on a Socialist basis. The result of this policy will be to produce the unusual spectacle of an economy with agriculture socialised and industry largely free.

In all these plans, Ben Gurion, Shertok and Kaplan are well aware that Anglo-Israeli relations will play a decisive part. If Britain tries to reorganise the Arab League, she can certainly force on Israel a siege economy which will retard and distort her economic plans. In so doing, however, we should exclude ourselves from what will be one of the best markets in which to sell our tractors, lorries and engineering equipment for good dollars; and we should weaken the Arab States which we desire to help. The alternative is to forget old scores and to collaborate wholeheartedly in all those plans for irrigation and soil conservation, such as the Jordan Valley Authority, which will help to bring about Jewish-Arab co-operation. This would mean treating Israel not as a menace but as a Socialist community whose aims and interests coincide with ours. We are both dependent, far more than we like, on economic aid from America, and we are both determined to retain our Socialist institutions despite that aid. Equally, it is a vital interest for both of us to assist in that reconstruction of Arab life which is the only defence against Communism. If only we could believe this of Israel—and Israel could believe it of us!

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

A LONDON DIARY

WHAT is to be done with Mr. Stanley? Looking for guidance in last Sunday's press, I was a little bewildered. *The People* was definitely pro-Stanley. Struggling to retain its position as the second biggest Sunday newspaper, it began his life story on the front page with an inspiriting description of his refusal to accept a despatch case full of "fivers" from a Russian agent in return for revealing "how he bribed the British Government." *The Sunday Dispatch* also was on his side. For some months it has been searching for a successor to *Forever Amber*, which once pushed up a sagging circulation. Last Sunday its front page was covered with the first part of Mrs. Stanley's tear-jerking story. *The Sunday Pictorial*, on the other hand, which hopes very soon to overtake *The People*, prefers to expose wickedness from the side of the angels. Its front page carried an indignant denial that it would publish any Stanliana, and demanded that he should be expelled from the country. From all this I draw the conclusion that, whether he is public hero or public enemy No. 1, Sidney Stanley is rated by experts on sales promotion as the most important single living man. I gather that the Polish Government has already stated that it will not accept his extradition. What about Israel? The draft constitution of the new State lays it down that every Jew has the right to settle there. Now that Mr. Bevin has found the correct address, he might raise the matter with the Israeli Government. It involves some very nice matters of law. Does the constitutional right of entry for every Jew imply a constitutional duty of acceptance of every Jew? In view of the quarrel between Israel and the Rumanian Government, I suspect that the answer is No. The Rumanians are demanding that in future they should select their Jewish emigrants to Palestine, and this has been fiercely opposed by the Jewish Agency, which is prepared to see all emigration from the Eastern Bloc dry up rather than surrender on the principle that it, and it alone, selects and organises Jewish immigrants. If Israel refuses to accept hand-picked Communists from the East, I fear that it will also refuse to accept a hand-picked Capitalist from the West. So it looks as though Mr. Stanley, in his own words, will have to "sink or swim with England."

* * *

Apparently Cardinal Mindszenty, who, before his arrest, warned the world to ignore any "confession" which might be attributed to him, has now signed a "confession," in which, it is said, he admits committing such crimes as keeping in close touch with Britain and America (which he presumably did and why not?) and discussing Western intervention in Hungary (which I should be much surprised if he failed to do). Catholic priests in this country, on the instruction of their Bishops, have given circumstantial accounts of how he was worn down by "ordeal." Our usually unsensational contemporary, the Catholic *Tablet*, gave such a lurid account of the "drug-torture" which was used that a fortnight later it has published a note, supplied at its own request, by a medical authority who describes its account as "so highly coloured and melodramatic as to shock a medical man." The drug, which it claimed was used, is *Actedron*, which is supposed to destroy the nerve centres and paralyse the will. A simple inquiry, such as I have made, from any pharmecological authority could have told the *Tablet* that *Actedron* is in fact *benzedrine phosphate*; which certainly does not have the effects ascribed to it. Benzedrine is a long-familiar drug which some of us sniff when we have a cold, which is used to keep people awake and sharpen their faculties. Students sometimes use it for examination purposes. It was used by all three British Services during the war and the R.A.F. issued it in special kits to keep "escapees" on the go. The only way it could have been used to extract a confession from Mindszenty was by artificially keeping him awake. Since the trial itself is to be public we should be able to judge for ourselves if there is any truth in these familiar allegations. If Mindszenty is "drugged" in court, that will be obvious; if he has been drugged or tortured at an earlier stage he is not the man to keep silent before a public tribunal.

* * *

On two occasions recently British newspapers have published sensational stories about Czechoslovakia. In one case a story appears to have been a total mistake and the other largely gossip. In neither case can I find any correction or withdrawal has been made, even when the error was clearly pointed out. The first instance concerns the *Daily Herald*. On January 24th it splashed as a front-page story a dispatch from G. R. Gedye under the headlines, "'Wired Wireless Only' Orders Communist Government," "Czechs to Give Up all Radio Sets," "No Listening to Foreign News." A very careful reader might have noticed that Gedye cabled from Vienna, and that his only source for this alleged announcement by the Czech Minister of the Interior was the *Wiener Tages Zeitung*. As soon as this was printed, the Czech Legation in London issued a categorical denial. I cannot find any reference to this denial in the *Daily Herald*. The other incident concerns the story about Czechoslovakia as the main source of Israeli armaments, which appeared simultaneously in nearly every London newspaper on January 7th, the morning of the day when the British planes made their fateful reconnaissance over the Negev. Since some of the papers referred to a "Foreign Office statement," the Czech Legation asked for a copy of it. After a good deal of buck passing between the Foreign Office and the C.O.I., it was informed that no statement had been made and that the source of all these stories was "a conversation between one of our officials and a journalist." This, of course, is not on a par with the *Daily Herald* incident. But it is disconcerting to find that the Foreign Office can inspire a sensational press campaign and then, when challenged, refuse to accept responsibility.

* * *

I was surprised how few people, in referring [illegible] death [illegible] H. Thomas, recalled that he [illegible] Parliamentarian. As a trade [illegible] leader he was [illegible]lar because he made good bargains for th[illegible]; he would have been [illegible] popular still [illegible] the persistent rumours that he also made good personal bargains with the employers. In the House of Commons he was always skilful. I recall witnessing the dramatic scene on the eve of the General Strike when, by precise and careful questioning, Thomas compelled Baldwin to admit that the Government had used the printers' strike in the *Daily Mail* as an excuse to end negotiations. This called the bluff of the T.U.C. leaders, who never expected to have to lead the national strike they threatened. He was a clever fellow, but a disaster. As "Minister for Unemployment" he began with high hopes but ended in tears. When he asked for "schemes" his civil servants piled his desk yards high with statistics and costings to show just how impossible, expensive and futile it was to do anything. Thomas, not used to documents and figures, collapsed. Nevertheless, if he had been honest, stuck to political jobs, where argument counts more than knowledge, he might have gone down to history as a successful politician. As it is, history will chiefly remember Thomas as Low depicted him and as it was so often possible to see him in the evening—stuffed out in a starched shirt, telling a smutty story with a cigar in the corner of his mouth. I remember George Lansbury saying after Thomas had made some particularly astute Parliamentary intervention, "What a wonderful leader for our Party Jimmy would be if only he were not such an awful man!"

* * *

The berries still hang red on the bushes, but They will have to hurry up if we are to have a hard winter this year. Of course, it is not too late yet; in this country we have no climate, only all sorts of weather. The great freeze-up of 1947 was in February and March. For my part I am not prepared to argue with Mr. Park, who thinks the sunshine "unseasonable," or with the farmers who, according to the B.B.C., are getting all hot and bothered about the prospect of frost biting all the excessively early buds. The chances of a good year for farmers are in any case so small that it is really no use being anxious. Even if we have a proper hard winter, followed by a nice soft, showery April, one really venomous frost in May is enough to undo the kindly work of months of carefully graduated weather. And, if, like Mr. Park, you argue that a mild winter leaves the pests to thrive with fatal results for next season's fruit and vegetables, well, the answer is that, bad as this sounds, it seems better than the opposite alternative which is to have a severe winter which kills the birds which eat the pests which destroy the crops which feed the men who will find plenty to grumble about anyway. It's more perplexing than the House that Jack Built. If They haven't got you one way They have got you another.

* * *

So far the worst that They have been able to do is to give us dollops of fog. I resent fog because I cannot see the use of it. With frost or snow I can at least enjoy the thought that some people are skating and snowballing, and that a lot of nasty insects are being deservedly killed off. But fog is to be condemned without compensation or extenuating circumstance. It causes death by bronchitis and pneumonia. It causes men to sin by way of blasphemy. It impedes both work and pleasure. I am sure it is an invention of the devil, and I know that science, if given the job, could reduce it to a mere local mist. While you proceed in a car at three miles an hour at the tail of another car you ask with increasing fury why it cannot get a move on. Then comes an opportunity to pass, and when you've done so you suddenly find yourself adrift, rudderless in a vast sea of impenetrable darkness. You wish to goodness you had not been impatient and taken a place at the top of the queue. You know that behind you is a string of infuriated drivers who mutter to themselves: "Why doesn't he get on a bit? It's not so bad; I can see his tail light quite clearly!"

* * *

Several solemn correspondents have written to say that Mr. Taylor erred in his last week's article on the execution of Charles I when he wrote: "Until the date [1649] the words of the poet held true:

> There's a divinity does hedge a King
> Rough hew him how we may."

In what did Mr. Taylor err? In borrowing a famous portmanteau joke from Samuel Butler? In calling Butler a poet? His answer in either case is, "O God! O Montreal!"

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Prizes are awarded of £1 for the first entry and 5/- for each of the others printed.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

English girls standing still in the nude will try to reproduce the atmosphere of the French show. "But if they move a single inch," Mr. J. S. H. Partridge, chairman of the Entertainments Committee of the justices, warned yesterday, "they may face the risk of prosecution by the police."—*Daily Mail*. (J. G. D. Walker.)

I am convinced that if a fox could vote, he would vote Tory.—Letter in *Sussex Express and County Herald*. (J. Perkins.)

It is fairly safe to say that pastel green or mauve hair will not be worn in London this spring.—*Star*. (W. S. Long.)

The N.A.S. based its policy on the fact that all children were different and biggest difference between boys and girls was that of sex.—Report of speech in Halifax *Daily Courier and Guardian*. (H. Holroyde.)

A municipal midwife recently had to be quartered in a small private hotel because of shortage of accommodation. She was asked not to use the general lounge because her presence might embarrass the other guests.—*Daily Mirror*. (H. J. Keeling.)

CULTURAL AUTARKY

"It will be necessary to have a Minister of Fine Arts . . . in general control of fine arts in the country."—Capt. Bullock, M.P. *Hansard*, Jan. 21.

A nationalised theatre is commended,
  Where artists and the State both play their parts,
And further patronage may be intended—
  A Government Department of Fine Arts.

The Treasury foresees with some complacence,
  On Bankside once again, the Muse's spring,
And Members feel a cultural renascence
  Should bud beneath the Ministerial wing.

But Governments are culturally clueless,
  Though ready for a Fine Arts Ministry,
The painters art, the wings of poesy viewless
  Are not the civil servant's cup of tea.

As State control becomes more comprehensive
  Art chokes beneath the planning octopus,
All culture, to inspectors, is offensive,
  Its contribution is superfluous.

In scenes of State-planned social reconstruction
  Declining culture struggles to survive,
Art is not on the schedules of production
  Excepting for the culture-export drive.

The State encourages the science student,
  While handicapping classics from the start,
The cult of culture is esteemed imprudent,
  The country needs technology, not art.

Bureaucracy in Planning and in Housing
  The ardour of the expert planner damps,
The Ministry of Works keeps busy dousing
  The blaze of Architecture's Seven Lamps.

When literature puts forth a lighted taper
  The Board of Trade proceeds to put it out;
To newsprint needs they allocated paper,
  While books, containing culture, went without.

And though they should, in one control, assemble
  State orchestras, and galleries, and reps,
The landscape of our culture would resemble
  The culturally barren Soviet steppes.

Since Ministry control in operation
  Displays this firmly anti-cultural trend,
The stage must take State aid with reservation—
  A Fine Arts Ministry would be the end.

SAGITTARIUS

THE CLOUD IN THE LANCASHIRE SKY

When Andrew Naesmith, the weavers' leader, was asked why he resigned recently from the Economic Planning Board, he replied: "I cannot leave Lancashire at the most critical hour in the history of the cotton industry." To many people this seemed a cryptic remark, contrasting oddly with the praise bestowed on the industry by Mr. Douglas Jay, M.P., a few days later, for the outstanding part it had played in last year's economic progress. Production of yarn exceeded the 1947 figure by nearly 20 per cent, and all but reached the 900 million lb. target set for 1948; and there was a less spectacular, but still substantial, expansion in the output of cotton piece-goods. Exports, in turn, were nearly double the 1947 figure.

Moreover, there had been some encouraging signs of a new spirit of co-operation in the industry, and of recognition by both employers and operatives that new methods must be adopted if Lancashire cotton is to hold its place in world markets. There had been the "pilot" schools—one in Blackburn for weavers, and one in Manchester for spinners—organised by the Cotton Board to tackle the problem of redeployment; and there had been the conference, attended by nearly a thousand managers and trade union officials, which the Cotton Board convened at Harrogate last October. At that conference, which heard many remarkable examples of increased output achieved by redeployment in individual mills, trade unionists, no less than managers, emphasised the necessity for reduced production costs to make British goods more competitive. Finally, though the target of a 58,000 increase in the industry's labour force (a sanguine expectation on the Government's part) was not reached, the numbers employed in the mills rose, during the first ten months of the year, by nearly 22,000, including 4,000 E.V.W.s.

What, then, did Naesmith mean by his reference to "the most critical hour"? Why so much anxious discussion in Lancashire today about the approaching end of the "sellers' market"? Why do the haunting memories of idle mills, wage-cuts and unemployment still persist in the minds of large sections of the operatives? To appreciate the source of these anxieties, one must cast one's mind back to the inter-war period when, after a hectic spell of high prices and profits in the post-Armistice scramble for goods, the cotton industry underwent what the Working Party has mildly described as the "phase of contraction" which began in 1924. In the ensuing fourteen years, annual output of cloth fell from 6,000 million sq. yds. to 3,100 millions, and exports from 4,400 million to 1,400 million sq. yds. By 1938, the 1924 labour force of 572,000 had sunk to 393,000; and unemployment, which reached a peak figure of 208,000 in 1930, still stood at 105,000. What Lancashire is wondering today is whether this history of "contraction" may not repeat itself.

If it does, the British cotton industry will have much less "room for manoeuvre." Despite the ground gained last year, the industry's labour force, production and exports are sadly smaller than they were when the boom collapsed in the 'twenties. Britain holds a diminished place in the world cotton market. In 1948, the U.S. produced nearly five times as much yarn, and over five times as many square yards of piece-goods, as Britain; and Japanese exports, which hit Lancashire hard between the wars, are once again on the increase. India, too, is not merely almost self-sufficient in cotton textiles; in some lines she is appearing as an aggressive competitor in exports. It is difficult therefore, to avoid the conclusion that, if the bitter experience of 1924–38 is not to be repeated, Lancashire must undertake a drastic overhaul of its leading industry. The measures needed fall into three categories—re-equipment, redeployment and new incentives.

As regards re-equipment, there is a grave shortage of up-to-date ring spindles and automatic looms; but uncertainty as to the future course of markets is leading to reluctance on the part of employers to invest in new machinery. Managements are vocal in complaints that tax allowances for depreciation of plant are inadequate, and that the re-equipment grants offered by the Government are not of much value so long as they are conditional on re-equipping at least one-third of a mill within three years. One leading manufacturer assured me that he could not "afford" re-equipment on such a scale until he could see his way to a "fair return" (defined as about 8 per cent. p.a.) on capital investment. It can also be noted that many operatives are reluctant to abandon the old-fashioned mule spindles. Ring spindles, it is generally agreed, yield an output per operative 150 per cent. greater than that of the mule spindle; and, though mules may be essential to produce some yarn, in which particular qualities are required, probably two-thirds of Lancashire's present output could be produced with greater technical efficiency by ring spindles. But mule-minding is "a man's job"; it calls for higher skill, and carries with it, on the average, 40-60 shillings more in wages per week than operatives earn from ring spindles. There is a strong vested interest here to be overcome.

On the weaving side, automatic looms represent barely 8 per cent. of the present total, as compared with 95 per cent. in the United States. In my experience, operatives are generally in favour of speedy replacement of the old-fashioned Lancashire looms; but British production of automatic looms is still very low and, with 50 per cent. of the output being exported, it would take forty years to make Lancashire weaving sheds half-way automatic. Yet the fact has to be faced that, while an average operator to-day looks after six old-fashioned looms, at least twenty automatic looms can be managed, with a scientifically calculated work-load, by a single operator.

The factors of cost and machinery-shortage, however, do not effect redeployment—that is, scientific work-load assessment, whereby individual output may be raised by 10-40 per cent. in the same period of time and with the same expenditure of effort. Methods include re-spacing of machinery, shortening the preliminary spinning processes and—a controversial issue—time-and-motion study. To these techniques there is resistance from influential sections of both employers and operatives. The intrusion of redeployment experts (usually industrial consultants) into the mills is resented by many owners and managers, who argue that they "know their plant," and that they cannot afford to have production "upset" by changing methods at a time when they are still doing well with sales. The operatives' resistance arises from a compound of (not altogether groundless) suspicion and the instinctive feeling that the stop-watch method in time-and-motion study is degrading and inhuman. They argue that redeployment will reduce the aggregate wage-bill; and they are dubious about the employers' willingness to cut selling prices proportionately to the decrease in production costs. And will not manpower economy, they ask, lead to unemployment?

There remains the question of incentives. As long as the attractions of a particular industry are measured by workers strictly in terms of wages, there is no immediate likelihood of large-scale recruitment into the cotton industry. Current rates of pay are double what they were before the war, and fresh demands for increases ranging from ten to twelve shillings a week have lately been put forward by unions representing a majority of the operatives. Nevertheless, earnings compare unfavourably with those obtainable in Lancashire's newer industries. If, therefore, Lancashire's hope of increased productivity, based on lower costs and higher quality, are to be realised, reliance must be placed not so much on more pairs of hands as on modernisation of plant and methods, coupled with a new sense, among the operatives, that cotton is "their" industry.

These objectives will not be achieved by the slow methods of trial and error which have characterised Lancashire's development since the first dynamic bursts of inventiveness two centuries ago. The cloud over Lancashire—the ending of the sellers' market—may as yet be no bigger than a man's hand; but time is not on the British cotton industry's side. If the industry's future is to be made secure, Lancashire's traditional virtues of shrewdness, kindness and sturdy common sense will have to be supplemented by a much more general acceptance of the necessity of "new ways" and a keener sense that managements and operatives will sink or swim together. Whether this can happen in an industry in which private enterprise is still so strongly entrenched has yet to be determined.

Andrew Hargrave

GREEK POLITICAL TRIALS

Production figures are high in Greece's single post-war industry. It was admitted by the Greek Government at Uno last November that there had been 1,500 executions. Death sentences have been pronounced on 4,738 persons, of whom those not executed have not been reprieved but are liable to execution at any time. There is a fluctuating prison and concentration camp population which, though no exact figure is available, must total about 30,000. Sentenced after fair trial? In view of British commitments in Greece, it is a question which we have both a right and a duty to ask.

Under the description "political trials," we must distinguish three types of judicial process. First, trials by the civil courts for criminal offences allegedly committed during the Axis occupation and the December, 1944, fighting. These have been covered by the Report of the British Legal Mission to Greece (1946), which makes abundantly clear their political character. The majority of the accused were connected with the Left-wing Resistance and in many cases were sentenced for killing proven collaborators. Probably rather less than a third of the total executions come from this category. But for world protests, however, all those sentenced to death would have been executed last May.

The second process is regarded as administrative rather than judicial. Security Committees were introduced directly after the March, 1946, elections. They consist of the provincial prefect, the public prosecutor and either a judge or a "nationally minded" citizen, with the Gendarmerie commander as adviser. Sitting in secret, they can sentence anyone to exile on an island as "dangerous to public order"; the accused is not usually present, no witnesses are called, and there is no right of legal defence. There is a right of appeal to a Committee of Second Instance, or direct to the Governor-General of the region—who appointed the Committee. These Committees have deported women whose menfolk had taken to the mountains, and even children, a girl of 11 having been sentenced as "quite dangerous." Laws of December, 1947, and January, 1948, appear to give the Government even wider powers of arbitrary deportation, and the concentration camp is now legalised under the euphemism "disciplinary living conditions."

The third and most remarkable process is trial by Special Courts-Martial under the Extraordinary Measures Act of June 18, 1946. This is not covered by the Legal Mission's Report. The Act, though nominally intended to meet the danger of an autonomist Left-wing rebellion, was passed at a time when, against two incidents involving partisans of the Left, the country had suffered over a year's terrorism from Right-wing bands. It introduced the death penalty for all acts regarded as conspiracy against the State and for "moral responsibility" for such conspiracy; also heavy penalties for certain types of strike, and for "illegal assembly." There is no limit to detention before trial and no right of appeal against the verdict, though application can be made for Royal Pardon. Death sentences may be carried out after three days. The tribunal consists of five army officers acting as judges, and the Royal Commissioner (prosecutor) is usually from the army legal service. Trials are public, though normally held in small, makeshift courtrooms. No verbatim minutes are kept. Probably over two-thirds of the executions up to date represent court-martial sentences, and I know of no case of a definite reprieve.

The prosecution case is built up by preliminary examination of the accused and by taking depositions from witnesses. If there are several accused, every effort is made to induce minor defendants to incriminate those charged with moral responsibility. In the Seamen's trial last autumn several of the accused, including all five women, repudiated statements which, they said, had been extorted by beating; and even the inevitable King's Evidence man failed to sustain his story. Hearsay evidence is admitted, and prosecution witnesses do not always appear for cross-examination. In the same trial an important deposition purported to come from a captured guerilla, who said he had been recruited by the Seamen's Union. But the man was not produced nor was his letter shown to the defence.

Defence counsel, professional lawyers engaged by the accused, face great difficulties. At Yiannitsa, in July, 1946, seven Macedo-Slavs were tried for their lives at one day's notice. The lawyer defending Pandelis Goussidhis at Serres, in July, 1947, saw his client twice, always in the presence of the Gendarmerie commander. In this trial only three defence witnesses were allowed, and one was subsequently arrested. A naval officer who had the courage to appear as defence witness in the Seamen's trial was himself threatened with court-martial. Such cases are legion, but even worse is the direct intimidation of counsel in provincial trials. G. Poulidhis, a well-known Athens lawyer, was assassinated by Right-wing irregulars on January 29, 1948, outside the courthouse in Tripolis, where he was defending in a Court-Martial trial. At the next trial there the accused was sentenced without defence because four lawyers in succession abandoned the case after receiving threatening notes and being refused protection by the authorities. It is from provincial trials, of course, that the most fantastic verdicts come—for instance, the death sentence passed at Trikkala, in December, 1947, on Matina Ploutoyianni for letting a room to a Communist.

There has been a progressive deterioration in procedure. Where some effort was once made to establish a prosecution case, emphasis has now shifted to cross-examination of the accused on his political opinions. Such questions as "Is Markos a Greek or a Slav?" "What is your opinion of the present situation?" "What do you think of the abduction of children?" are fired at him by the tribunal. If he objects that they are irrelevant, he is told that "Failure to denounce the bandits is sufficient evidence of complicity." Some surprising verdicts result. In Salonica, in October, 1947, forty-seven people were sentenced to death in connection with a hand-grenade attack on an Air Force bus, though the three supposed to be actually responsible were never produced by the police. One man sentenced to death for [illegible] "mutiny" of February, [illegible] by a guard "moving [illegible] wd." His offence was [illegible] first who refused to [illegible] ation. Later, he too [illegible] way. This sentence has not been carried out. When seven were tried in Athens last June for the killing of the Minister of Justice, the actual killer recanted, gave information to the police and, though sentenced, was not executed. Another prisoner, Makridhis, against whom there was no circumstantial evidence, paid with his life for a resolute defence of his convictions. The trial of Captain Venetsanopoulos, now postponed, promised to be a simple issue of recantation or an exemplary death sentence.

In practice, death sentences passed by a vote of three to two are usually not carried out, and cases accepted for consideration by the Council of Grace, which advises on the granting of pardons, are regarded as provisionally shelved. If public protest abroad stops an execution, official determination may find another way out. Thus, Goussidhis was shot "by mistake" at Serres and, of the ten trade unionists sentenced in the Seamen's trial, Ambatielos, Bekakos and Timoyiannakis will be tried again on much the same charges but with other groups. It becomes increasingly difficult to escape from two conclusions: that these trials aim at elimination of all potentially active opponents, both for practical and for deterrent purposes; and that we and the U.S.A. are condoning the slaughter of men and women for their convictions.

What, then, can we do? In 1946, the British All-Party Parliamentary Delegation to Greece recommended the cancellation of the Special Security decrees. I have tried to show how these decrees have been applied. To say that the two nations which have had troops, Missions and advisers stationed in Greece have no share in the responsibility and no status to intervene is a masterpiece of legalistic cynicism. Yet, last November, Mr. Mayhew said in Parliament: "We cannot accept responsibility for the administration of Greek justice." Could we not have sent another Legal Mission to inquire into the workings of Security Committees and Courts-Martial, with a request for the suspension of executions pending its report? Even at the eleventh hour, effective intervention to halt political persecution, so cruelly misnamed "justice," might perhaps create a new basis for conciliation. At least, it would ensure that the manner of our leaving Greece became us better than the sordid record of our sojourn there.

MARION PASCOE

SO THEY SAY . . .

ON January 24th Mr. Harold Wilson, according to *The Times,* told a press conference that he would have something to say in the next week or two about future clothes rationing. He pointed out that the trade was divided about the desirability of ending rationing. While accepting the view that rationing is now to a large extent by price rather than by coupons, he said that, on the other hand, certain goods were beginning to become scarce, and might become scarcer.

Headlines Never Lie

How was this statement treated by other newspapers? Here is a selection of headlines:—

Daily Telegraph: CLOTHES PLAN: FEW CHANGES.
Daily Express: ANOTHER CLOTHES BONUS?
Daily Graphic: WILSON WARNS OF SCARCER CLOTHING.
News Chronicle: WILSON HAS GOOD NEWS FOR YOU ON CLOTHES.

* * *

Department of Coincidences

Time, December 20th:—

> [Charlie Ventura's band] played their instruments with loud, emotionless precision . . . No one screamed; no one bounced; no one fell in a fit; no one left.

Daily Express, January 3rd:—

> [Ted Heath's band] played their instruments with loud, emotionless precision . . . No one bounced; no one swooned; no one screamed.

Durban Daily News, January 15th:—

> When people are ill-housed, packed into congested areas, deprived of proper transport, denied recreational facilities, subject to political frustration and some degree of economic exploitation, then the ground has been well prepared for terrorist outbreaks.

Daily Mail, January 17th:—

> When people, particularly natives, are ill-housed, packed into filthy, congested areas, denied educational or recreational facilities, subjected to economic exploitation, and not given any say whatever in their own interests by the government of the land—then there is bound to be blood on the moon.

Exercises in Arithmetic

(*Monte Carlo Rally*)

Daily Telegraph: 37 cars left Glasgow . . .
Daily Express: 46-car crocodile heads South.
The Star: All 47 British challengers . . .
News Chronicle: The 49 Glasgow Starters . . .
Evening Standard: 50 Rally Drivers Finish First Lap.

(*Dakota Crash, January 25th*)

Daily Mail: 8 KILLED IN R.A.F. DAKOTA CRASH.
Daily Graphic: TEN DEAD IN R.A.F. PLANE CRASH.
Daily Mirror: SEVENTEEN SICK CHILDREN IN BRITISH PLANE CRASH.
Daily Herald: 25 CRASH IN SOVIET ZONE.
Daily Telegraph: 27 CASUALTIES IN DAKOTA CRASH.

* * *

A Matter of Principle

The People, January 9th:—

> This is the last time that this newspaper will report in its columns details of the squalid love affair of film star Rita Hayworth and Prince Aly Khan. We have taken this decision on the grounds of public decency . . .

The People, January 16th: MORALITY BAN ON RITA?

The People, January 23rd:—

> The ridiculous "romance" of Rita Hayworth and Prince Aly Khan took a still more ridiculous turn yesterday . . .

AUTOLYCUS

SCIENCE OUT OF STEP

A HARD-PRESSED family doctor on his way to his tenth visit ("I've got pains all over, doctor") stopped long enough to express his views on specialists. "Take old Binks," he said, referring to one of his classmates who had just put up his plate in Harley Street. "He'll go far! He's already the leading authority on rheumatoid arthritis of the second joint of the little toe of the left foot of flint-knappers."

This knowing more and more about less and less is a matter of growing concern. In science, as well as in medicine, ambitious young men want to be specialists and to avoid being "general practitioners." And sometimes I feel like that family doctor and wince when I find myself writing "Dr. So-and-so is an expert on mesons." Mesons are components of cosmic rays which bombard us from outer space. These particles are bigger than an electron but smaller than a proton, and may be the "glue" which holds the atomic nucleus together. They are most important but it probably means that Dr. So-and-so knows all about mesons to the neglect of the wider consideration of physics and of the Natural Philosophy of which it is part.

This fragmentation of science into narrower and narrower specialities is yielding a vast amount of new knowledge, but the problem is how to relate that knowledge. For, among other things, the scientific sub-species invent their own language. No scientific dictionary can pretend to be up to date for twenty-four hours on end. It is true that, if you are good at anagrams, you might be able to guess at the meaning of the latest word, but usually its full meaning is apparent only to the small esoteric group amongst whom it was invented. As often as not, the terms and practices may be obscure even to scientists working in the same branch of science and certainly to those outside that branch.

A great deal of the trouble which exists to-day —this reiterated complaint that the material advances of science are outstripping the moral attributes of Man—is due to the "Flying Columns" of science, dashing ahead of the general advance so that the line can never be properly consolidated. Within these salients spectacular advances are made but they are difficult to reinforce. Leaving aside the obvious one of atomic energy, a typical instance is what happened in British Guiana. The chemists had discovered powerful insecticides, like D.D.T. In 1944, Sir Robert Robinson and Sir J. L. Simonsen visited the colony where the population had remained static, i.e., the coffins had equalled the cradles, for generations. The leveller was the mosquito, carrier of malaria, yellow fever and filariasis, which bred in the wooden houses. The Mission advised an all-out campaign with insecticides. At an annual cost of five shillings a head of the population, malaria has been practically eliminated from the colony. Within eighteen months of the campaign starting, the birth rate had doubled and the infantile mortality had dropped from over 350 per thousand to 67 per thousand. The population is now increasing by ten per cent. annually. An entirely commendable advance; but not unless on the other scientific fronts—agriculture and nutrition—provision is made to feed the newcomers. Otherwise it is merely exchanging disease for famine.

The burden of Sir Henry Tizard's presidential address to last year's British Association was the complaint that in this country science was outstripping technology, and that what we needed was not more discoveries but the proper application and absorption of those already made. This is another aspect of the same problem. Intensive laboratory science, particularly under the impetus of war, has produced a vast number of "growing-points" from which new processes, new materials and even new industries can be developed. Notably, of course, there is the development of electronics—stimulated by radar—by which the infinitesimal electron becomes a powerful and instantaneous slave.

But to exploit these laboratory discoveries, new skills are needed in industry, not only at the bench but in the managers' office and at the director's table. The directors usually belong to a generation unresponsive to science; in management the emphasis is usually on administration and not on technics, and in the workshops the old skills tend to resist the new. That means new training, starting with the schools and depending on the expansion of our technical colleges. To provide such training we need teachers—good teachers—and the despairing cry at the moment is that it is impossible to get good science teachers. This is partly due to the under-payment of graduate teachers generally. This makes taking a science or any other degree barely worthwhile; but a bigger factor is that anyone with a scientific training has more remunerative prospects if he goes into industry or the Government scientific service. This is a pity, because a science teacher at least has a bigger sweep of his subject than the specialist.

Another problem, for which I do not pretend to have the answer, is the present tendency towards the segregation of the talents in school. This again encourages specialisation; by the time a boy or girl reaches the sixth form he or she has often been "seeded" as a physicist (perhaps even as a nuclear physicist) or as a chemist (perhaps even as an organic chemist) instead of going forward to the general discipline of science. Conversely, we have been suffering—since the war—from the body-snatching, or kidnapping, of the war years when children and young students were recruited directly into radar, if they had any special aptitude, and tended to get set in their ways.

So, as a nation, we are impaled on a whole antler of dilemmas. We have to keep abreast or ahead of scientific advances in other countries, which have greater manpower resources; that means high level specialists. We have got to have technologists; that again means specialists. We have got to have science teachers in the schools, colleges and universities; and that is competing with the demand for specialists. And we have got to have the G.P.s of science, men and women equipped with general knowledge of science in assimilating new advances but still looking at problems as a composite and living entity and not treating each problem in isolation.

Some means must be evolved of producing this synthesis in science; it is not produced by the creation of learned societies or sub- sub-sub-groups of these societies, because there like is talking to like. It is not met even by the Royal Society, where in theory it should be, because Fellows turn up for papers on their own subject and usually avoid the others. It is met to some extent by the annual conference of the British Association where the discussions in thirteen sections provide a wide sweep, but here again the tendency is for scientists to patronise the sections which deal with their own particular subject, and there is a reluctance even to have joint sectional discussions, an intelligent development of recent times. It ought, of course, to be possible in the universities, but there again there is a noticeable segregation of the faculties.

An interesting example of what the consequences can be is to be found in the story of penicillin. Fleming, with the trained mind of a brilliant bacteriologist, recognised the effects of the little bit of fluff, or fungus, which landed on his germ culture. He did not know what fungus it was and was misled in its identification by a mycologist, a mould specialist. He tried to extract the active factor but was unable to do so, and although completely convinced that he was "on something" had to lay it aside. Professor Raistrick, the biochemist at the London School of Hygiene, who specialised in the extraction of "living chemicals" from moulds, came across Fleming's report and, with the help of an American mycologist, correctly identified the mould and began work on extracting the active element (which we now know as penicillin).

At a critical stage his mycologist was killed by a bus and his bacteriological associate, Dr. Lovell, took up another appointment. As Fleming said afterwards, "I had failed to advance further for want of adequate chemical help, and Raistrick and his associates had lacked bacteriological co-operation. So the problem of effective concentration of penicillin remained unsolved." The distance which separated Fleming, the bacteriologist, at St. Mary's Paddington from Raistrick, the biochemist, at the London School of Hygiene at Euston is barely two miles. It took seven years to travel that distance via Oxford, where Chain and Florey independently extracted penicillin. Nor does the story end there, because penicillin had to be farmed out to America for mass production as we lacked the technological facilities.

The unbalance in science reveals itself, in a most challenging way, in the discussion now raging over the Ground-Nuts Scheme in East Africa, because of the shortage of field scientists. Thoughtful people are concerned at the long-term risks involved in the project because enough attention has not been given to ecology, that is, to the mutual relations between living things and their environment. There ought to have been an exhaustive study by field naturalists of what might happen in the drastic conversion of nature in that area. But we are short of field naturalists although we are pre-eminent (*pace* Lysenko) in genetics, cytology and the botanical minutiae. And we are short of field geologists. The Royal Society Empire Conference was told that there were only five field geologists for the whole continent of Australia. We badly need these scientific "leg-men" at a time when brilliant and ambitious young scientists want to go in for laboratory research. When a young student shows distinction he is encouraged to go on with some post-graduate research project, and the odds are that he will get engrossed and specialise. Of course, the answer might be, now that there is a market for field workers, to encourage him, when he qualifies, to get out into the field and widen his experience before he comes back to pursue more detailed researches.

This is much more than the problem of recruitment and deployment of scientific manpower, on which the Barlow Committee laid emphasis; it concerns the fabric of science. Until we realign it as Natural Philosophy, it will be difficult to reconcile it with Moral Philosophy and to establish it, as it should be, as one of the Humanities.

RITCHIE CALDER

The Arts and Entertainment

MATTHEW SMITH

THE praise bestowed by Roger Fry on Matthew Smith in *The Nation* of May 1st, 1926, celebrated his first London exhibition at the Mayor Gallery. Now, twenty-two years later, the same gallery (14, Brook Street) is showing fifteen of his pictures painted between 1921 and 1946. This time the artist whom Fry found to "have a markedly personal sensibility to visual impressions . . . and who has known how to set to work to bring it to expression" may be considered our most distinguished living painter. Congratulations are due to him on his recent Honour: and also, on the quality of the present show, to the dealer who first backed him. Unlike some of his gifted contemporaries, Matthew Smith has been content to recognise his special talent, to realise and develop it intensively. We may regret that he lives in these days of easel pictures and not in times when great decorations were commissioned, for everything he does is conceived in the grand manner.

Yet, despite the radiance of his canvases, his range is surprisingly small. He paints only three subjects—still lives with flowers and fruit, female models, country landscapes. His exotic tastes restrict the list still more. No withered daisy, no weedy spinster or deserted moorland, stands a chance of attracting his brush. He delights in peonies, lilies, dahlias, roses, magnolias, mimosa; women, sumptuous in cheek and thigh, curled up in nests of silk or velvet brocade; rolling hills, bulbous groups of bushes, twisting olive trees. And two visual attributes of these themes are almost his only concern—their volume and their colour.

Such predilections are unusual in English painting. Our well-known literary tastes incline rather to interpretations of character in people and places; or translations into another medium of varieties of texture; or the bringing together of familiar objects in an unfamiliar context. More inward-looking painters have distilled a poetry from perceptions of the outer world or have made some astonishing restatement of forms observed under the influence of different moods. All these works, like most traditional painting, demand a positive response from the spectator if his aesthetic experience is to be complete. He must return the ball, answering the painter's hints, protests and exclamations with echoes culled from *his* experience of the world. When such an intercourse flows smoothly, when, as in bridge, there is easy movement between the hands of the declarer and the dummy, we enjoy the deepest pleasures painting can afford.

However, in these matters Matthew Smith belongs to the Ecole de Paris, devising his pictures for their formal effect. Like Braque, he makes his statement within the four sides of the frame and, if we do not enjoy what we see, memories of a herbaceous border or of the end of a Chelsea party or of rambles in Provence will not help us. The actual process of rendering his subjects into paint—the surface never pretends to be anything else—produces a kind of generalisation about the visual world typical of many great artists. This needs no more than passive contemplation and a wakeful eye to be fully appreciated.

Although we cannot discover Matthew Smith's secret, some elements of his method may be found in the fifteen pictures Mr. Mayor is showing. First we must notice the unity informing each picture. No special beauty resides in the parts; indeed the texture is often inexpressive and unpleasant. But the paintings are planned on noble, generous lines, and every stroke of the brush contributes to the total effect. We can study the scaffolding of an unusual composition in the outlines of *Young Girl* (No. 15). A curved arm sweeps right across the foreground from side to side. It divides the canvas, presenting a problem like that of the horizon line in a landscape. Above it the inclined head, the chair's back, and lastly (in diminishing scale) the lines of the breasts and necklace combine to redress the balance, making a design as satisfying in its precision as a still life by Juan Gris. The unity is not only that of surface pattern—depth and weight are its essentials. Through the colour alone, which springs easily from the outlines of each area, the volumes come to life. Matthew Smith's outstanding gift is that of creating three dimensional forms entirely out of colour. In the earlier works he uses curves, bows, hoops and arches to knit in place the overlapping planes, but now his sense of tone is so sure that they are hardly needed. The 1946 picture, *Flowers* (No. 4), painted in London, is a fine example: and in that gay tumble of pink and crimson, *Couleur de Rose* (No. 11), he achieved an early virtuoso success. The dark sky, however, of the smaller landscape (No. 3) seems to introduce a forced note of drama, and the large *Falling Model* (No. 6) fails as a composition. If in all these years Matthew Smith has made no radical change, he has obtained much greater luminosity in the use of rich opaque pigment, and he has learnt to work successfully in cooler ranges of colour, such as we see in the *White Dahlia* (No. 1) and the two beautiful landscapes.

Eyes accustomed to contemporary orgies of understatement, monochrome and restraint get a peculiarly happy shock from the imprudence of Matthew Smith's paintings, with their spectacular *abandon.* Experience sometimes makes us believe that the brightest colours, dear to children and savages, must stand for exaggeration and vulgarity. Matthew Smith shows that, while his art survives, we need never forfeit these chromatic pleasures.

EARDLEY KNOLLYS

RUBBRA'S SYMPHONIES

FREE from the desire to seem original or startling, Edmund Rubbra quietly pursues his chosen path as a symphonist; his five symphonies were all written within the last twelve years, and there might have been almost as many more, it seems, but for the interruption of the war. One cannot but admire this single-minded devotion, for though each of the five encountered critical enthusiasm at the outset, the enthusiasm was usually followed by neglect: to Prom. audiences they are almost unknown, none has been recorded, even scores are unobtainable by the general public. The Third, with its fine first movement, comes nearest to being a popular work, and turns up occasionally in radio programmes; and I recently had the good fortune to hear the Fourth at Bournemouth (where, by the way, Mr. Rudolf Schwarz has justified his controversial appointment by the astonishing variety and enterprise of his programmes). Now, with the presentation of Rubbra's No. 5 in B Flat by the Royal Philharmonic Society, and its broadcasting on two successive nights, by the B.B.C. Orchestra under Sir Adrian Boult, we reach, not a turning-point in his career (for there is no evidence of the slightest change of direction), but a stage of evident maturity; it is one of those works which seem to consolidate their authors' previous achievements; it contains the best, the essence, of Rubbra's lonely talent.

That essence has been accurately defined by the composer's ablest and most enthusiastic apologist, Mr. Wilfred Mellers, whose long essay in his *Studies in Contemporary Music* is well worth attention, even though the claims which he makes seem rather high pitched. What Rubbra has done, as Mr. Mellers points out, is to abandon the nineteenth-century conception of dramatic conflict and tension as the mainspring of symphonic writing in favour of continual lyrical germination from a single melodic idea or group of ideas. Something roughly parallel was achieved by Sibelius in his Sixth Symphony, and by Fauré in his late chamber music; and a development along these lines seems to be called for by the present state of music. In the hundred years or so since Beethoven's death, lyricism has retreated further and further from the symphonic allegro, to be replaced by a dramatic and rhythmical tension which frequently approaches hysteria, and by continual dynamic climaxes to which the resources of the modern orchestra lend an almost intolerable weight and punch. For a bad example, take Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto; for a better, Walton's Symphony, immensely stimulating for a while, in the long run curiously fatiguing, because it demands a response which our nerves are often unwilling or unable to give.

After the restless excitement of so much contemporary music, both good and bad, there is an inexpressible pleasure in the opening pages of a Rubbra Symphony, like getting out of a noisy modern town into the open country; but that is too external a comparison for so abstract a thinker: what we really experience is communion with the meditative spirit of an unfretful, satisfied man. The fundamentally diatonic harmony is, by modern standards, unadventurous; but there soon comes one of those small, delightful harmonic shocks which we feel keenly only when we have a definite expectation of the opposite; for example, in the lovely opening of No. 4, the unresolved dominant sevenths. The theme grows, spreads its wings, attracts counter-subjects which do the same; we turn a corner, and perceive a fresh vista, no less spacious and serene, towards which we are gently, irresistibly drawn. So far, all is unclouded satisfaction of the spirit: a tranquillity rare in contemporary art. But for some listeners (of whom I am one) trouble lies ahead: the trouble of texture.

This problem was bound to arise from the very nature of Rubbra's symphonic style, based on lyrical, vocal polyphony ("gigantic instrumental motets," his symphonies have been called). As the complexity grows and the strands multiply, the moment arrives when, one by one, the brass begin to enter; and having entered, there they stay, proceeding inexorably with the thematic material allotted to them, and soon joined by their fatter and louder companions. At first, these simultaneous melodic lines on the brass make a pleasantly archaic effect; but we gradually discover that the composer, apparently undisturbed by the resultant jarring overtones, is quite capable of keeping the whole thing going full blast for a considerable stretch of time. This is the point at which the infidel finds all his anti-Rubbra prejudices confirmed, and the moderate admirer begins to feel doubts. Can music really be good which often sounds so coarse? The question posed itself all the more insistently in the Albert Hall because the symphony was immediately preceded by that exquisitely tempered little masterpiece, Fauré's *Ballade* for Piano and Orchestra, a tissue of silk lying on the counter beside thick tweed. A short answer to this complaint is that tweed is not inferior to, only different from, silk; and it may be that our post-Debussyan ears have grown too insistent on tonal refinements. In the past a certain coarseness of the ear has been a frequent characteristic of the English school; with Rubbra at least, the effect is not due to thickening for thickening's sake, as in an Elgarian climax. I can see no easy solution to this problem; linear, non-impressionistic orchestration is the inevitable counterpart of Rubbra's structural style, and the most that one can suggest is that more air could with advantage be allowed to circulate between his melodic strands, that he might handle his brass more cautiously, perhaps score for a smaller complement; in all these respects the Sibelius Sixth is

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a model. It is not that Rubbra lacks the instinct of orchestral colour; he writes happily for woodwind, often in flowing thirds which, over his characteristic plucked basses, give a Brahmsian sound to many pages; and the long, impassioned, curving lines of his melodies are laid out for the string choir with loving mastery.

The new symphony consists nominally of three movements, but the slow sections of its two outer movements are very much more than introductions; the opening *Adagio* is an exposition which sets the tone and mood of the whole work, and the *Grave* which begins the last movement is, in effect, quite an extended slow movement, after which the final six-eight *Allegro vivo* seems both too trivial and too short. It appears to remain a characteristic of Rubbra that he finds slow or *moderato* movements easier to handle than rapid allegros, and this is not surprising, given the contemplative cast of his mind; his middle movements, sometimes *grazioso* Brahmsian intermezzi, usually avoid the name of scherzo. The central movement of the Fifth Symphony consists of a single jaunty, irrepressible theme whirled acrobatically (sometimes upside down) through every one of the twelve keys; here again our sense of exhilaration depends upon the contrapuntal and harmonic ingenuity, rather than, as in most modern scherzos, upon vertiginous speed and tricky rhythm. As a whole, the new symphony leaves us with the impression of a musician far less brilliant, far less inventive, far more homely than Rawsthorne or Walton or Arthur Bliss, or the dazzling Britten of *Peter Grimes* and the *Serenade*, but endowed, nevertheless, with a stubborn determination to plough every acre of his talent and to explore the reverent, austere and slightly pedantic world of his imagination to its last corner. Perhaps (I don't mean to be disparaging) he may prove to be the English Reger.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

RADIO NOTES

IN a week or so bristling with notable centenaries Charles I and Strindberg have jostled each other for first place in recent programmes. Beddoes, it is true, has also obtained a hearing, but Charles James Fox seems hardly to have been able to reach the microphone at all; and since the main Strindberg works to be broadcast, *The Father* and *A Dream Play*, are, in fact, recordings of programmes already heard, I think it fair to say that Charles has won. As Mr. Geoffrey Trease, in his recent study of children's literature, *Tales Out of School*, points out: "The fiction-writer's Cavalier sympathies are almost invariable"; and the character of Charles and the circumstances of his death, like those of his grandmother, still arouse the fiercest controversy. It seems impossible to contemplate a Stuart without a rush of emotion to the head. To say, therefore, that Mr. Ross Williamson's feature, *The Trial and Execution of Charles I* was an objective presentation would probably provoke indignant denials from the Roundheads who still survive. Certainly it was a most moving programme; the nobility with which Charles met his death can scarcely be questioned, and in this instance the king was played by that fine actor Mr. McKechnie. But I think that the open-minded and uninformed listener was bound to ask whether Cromwell was indeed the malicious bumpkin with the slobbering idiot laugh that he was made to appear in this programme. He and Charles, alone of the cast, were saddled with an accent; but there are accents and accents: Charles's was Scots, and a Scots accent on the air is itself almost a guarantee of its possessor's integrity, whereas Cromwell's was East Anglian rustic which, whether intentional or not, could scarcely fail to suggest a clodhopper. I found this programme particularly interesting in relation to Miss Jenifer Wayne's *The Character of Charles I*, a feature written from material and advice supplied by Miss C. V. Wedgwood and the first of a series on the writing of history which should be of real importance. Composed with all the technical ingenuity and feeling for the medium which one takes for granted in Miss Wayne's work, it took us back to the sources on which any estimate of Charles's character must depend. A radio-actor is to play Charles: his romantic interpretation, based on vague memories of school history books, fails to satisfy the writer of the script, and in an effort to arrive at the truth the authorities, from Charles's contemporaries on, are called in to give their findings. At the end, actor and writer must still draw their own conclusions. It made a most fascinating programme, to which it is to be hoped all latter-day Jacobites and Whigs listened. Perhaps we may have a similar programme on Cromwell, preferably well in advance of the tercentenary celebrations.

But the long shadow of Charles Stuart must not be allowed to obliterate other unrelated programmes of the week, in particular Mr. Christopher Sykes's *Return Journey to Berlin*. This was a most sensitive, attractive and magnanimous programme, excellently produced by Mr. W. P. Rilla; while Mr. Sykes himself was excellently played by Mr. Sebastian Shaw. Of all recent programmes on the Berlin of to-day none, it seems to me, has more poignantly conveyed the desolation of that city. And Mr. Sykes's recollections of the Berlin of the 'Twenties were equally well done. So, too, were his vignettes of the German character: his attempts to persuade his German hosts of the genius of James Joyce in the face of their obstinate determination to talk about that greatest of Irish writers, Bernard Shaw, under-rated in England because of his Roman Catholicism, made one of the most delightful pieces of comedy I have heard in the Third Programme. But what, above all, gave *Return Journey to Berlin* its uncommon distinction were the civilised quality of Mr. Sykes's comments and his style. For style, as the expression of the writer's personality, is, it seems to me, the rarest attribute of the radio feature.

WILLIAM SALTER

THE THEATRE

THE second of this season's Old Vic productions is the re-appearance of Sir Laurence Olivier in Richard III. I remember being immensely impressed by this performance some four years ago; and I wondered, as I watched it the other night, whether the brilliance of much of it hadn't blinded me to its faults. For it no longer seems quite as good as it did; and since the brilliance has been so widely praised, perhaps it will not seem grudging to try now to trace the weakness. The marvellous opening speech of self-revelation is delivered by Olivier as perfectly as I remember it before. The edge on his voice is ice, and what has been frozen in Richard of Gloucester is that pity which enables the normal man to come to terms with the worst of his own defects. But this man cannot forgive himself his; sprouting into deformity as they are, he must flaunt them against the world. Having no mercy for himself, he has none for others; and his bitterness is displayed at its bleakest in a wintry sort of humour so sardonic, so pitiless, that it curdles our response.

But then, as the story moves, we bump up against what must be, given a great actor, the real difficulty in playing it. Exactly what kind of laughter is he to evoke in us? Very early on Sir Laurence seemed to me to be getting the wrong kind. The first time it happened I felt a pang of sympathy for him as an actor—he was being misunderstood by the more obvious-minded of his audience, who seemed to think Richard Crookback "funny." Not, that is

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to say, funny in some mordant, macabre way, but just ordinarily funny. I expected to hear him being careful next time to point the edge more sharply. But no, it comes again, and again, until one realises that he is deliberately playing for that kind of ordinary laugh. There is, perhaps, scriptural authority for this, if G.B.S. can now be counted scripture: for he speaks of this king as "Punch-Richard." But that Punch is surely the heartless Punch of Punch and Judy, not the *Punch* that appears each Wednesday. Whatever else Richard III was, he was not what, in ordinary life, we mean by "amusing." We should not, if we met him, find ourselves sympathetically chuckling, any more than we would if we found ourselves next to Nero or Hitler. "And when he laughed, the little children died in the streets." That line from Auden's *Epitaph on a Tyrant* gives exactly to me the quality, not impish but devilish, that we should get from Richard's humour; it should produce in us the uneasiest of laughter, the laughter that is crossed with a shudder.

This, it may be argued, is too "modern," too "psychological" an interpretation: Shakespeare had no artistic conscience and cared nothing for consistency. Yet some degree of consistency is just what we cannot help looking for in a production that is not Elizabethan; and to have followed this clue might have prevented some of the over-broad excesses in the scenes where the Mayor and the citizens are being fooled. The farce Richard and Buckingham are playing here resembles some nasty practical joke played by a vicious schoolboy on his weaker fellows. (Such a boy, too, has his henchman who laughs with him, but timorously and, above all, obsequiously; for nothing is so capricious as a tyrant's sense of humour). But—here is the point—this kind of joke is no fun for the tyrant unless the victims suffer or, at the least, are frightened: and the effectiveness of these scenes is quartered if the mayor is made a funny little figure of fun; for that allows the audience once again to escape with the wrong kind of laughter—laughter with Richard at the expense of his victims. This scene, all the same, provides at its end one of the best moments; where Richard, having been proclaimed king, tosses aside his missal and jumps down through the window to force the first obeisance from his henchman. And from then on Sir Laurence returns to the sharper, more sardonic temper of his opening soliloquy—a temper which I seem to remember having been much more consistently there before. The performance has sagged a little and coarsened.

Nor do I seem to remember in that earlier production such gross touches as there are now in the scene where Clarence is done to death. No interpretation, however inconsistent, can surely allow the two murderers to be dressed and played as conventional "Shakespearean clowns," bum-funning around over their butcher's work. This produces some most lamentable laughs; as, for instance, when Clarence wakes, expecting to find the keeper with him:

> "Where art thou, Keeper? Give me a cup of wine,"

and is answered by the murderer:

> "You shall have wine enough, my Lord, anon."

And that last terrible line, weighted with tragic irony, is received, in the context of the fooling that has preceded it, with a guffaw.

But there are many sad lapses of taste in this production, too many to chronicle; let one stand as a sample—Richmond praying by his tent is presented as an Academy picture of a young St. George with golden hair and "faery" light, a picture which, if it were "hung," would be at once reproduced in all the commoner Gift Books. It is sad to see such abysmal vulgarity in a leading London production.

T. C. Worsley

THE MOVIES

"The Passionate Friends," at the Marble Arch Odeon

"Eureka Stockade," at the Marble Arch Pavilion

That run of English triumphs which we should all—even we hypochondriac critics—rejoice to see, stays infuriatingly round the corner. Two of our best directors, Mr. David Lean and Mr. Harry Watt, show themselves this week at their second best. *The Passionate Friends* is a brilliantly manufactured affair in which Mr. Lean, after his Dickensian adventures, returns to the manner and almost the matter of *Brief Encounter*. Three people again monopolise the scene, the wife has a romantic affair and just keeps it at arm's length, Mr. Trevor Howard very decently comes and goes, the railway line offers a way out, and the final victory is for husband, marriage and common sense. But where are the earlier simplicity and charm? Where, for that matter, Mr. Noel Coward? A not very impressive Wells novel, re-written by Mr. Eric Ambler, supplies the script; more Ambler than Wells I should think, despite the respect for bankers, the wave of the hand at alps, and the fact that the lover is a biologist; and more David Lean than either. This is very much a director's film. Its pleasures are in light and shade rather than story; give yourself up to the photographic behaviour and you will enjoy some very pretty sensations. Mr. Claude Rains (as the husband) is photographed very dramatically, and Miss Ann Todd very beautifully; and I should like to experience again, for example, the moment of hopeless crisis when Mr. Howard is left alone in the banker's office and the ticker-tape begins its stutter. There are many such moments—small touches of drama, individual or scenic effects—to remember. Yet they don't quite add up; or rather they add up very slowly, and the answer (when all's said and done) is considerably less than *Brief Encounter*. The better one's memory of that film, the less probably one's enjoyment of *The Passionate Friends*. It plays safe with skill and some subtlety, and one can only wish Mr. Lean rather more strength to his arm next time. In the same programme, by the way, *Struggle for Oil* (No. 25, "This Modern Age") gives a first-rate glimpse into oilfields and power politics; compare its incisiveness, speed, and visual excitement with the vague gesturing of the current "March of Time" (*Answer to Stalin*).

The disappointment of *Eureka Stockade* is far more flattening than that of *The Passionate Friends*. Mr. Harry Watt here repeats and exaggerates the faults of *The Overlanders*—stiff would-be natural acting and limping dialogue—without any corresponding epic sweep. Nothing in the present film takes the place of that army of cattle on the march, though the Australian gold rushes of the Seventies and the conflict between diggers and authority would seem to offer material promising enough. A big battle takes place; we have seen many better battles. The chief characters, as characters, remain still, while the crowd capers. There is an arid charm in the landscape, and the appeal of unfamiliar history; but that is about all. A film that should thrill only agreeably interests. And yet we have the feeling that its director has tried hard and not, like Mr. Lean, relapsed into too easy grooves of habit. The step from documentary to fiction obviously, beyond a certain point, becomes so difficult that I wonder whether Mr. Watt would not do better to attach himself again more closely to documentary. He could, from all he has learnt and attempted in these last two films, greatly enhance the more factual method, and never has there been a greater need for such enhancement.

William Whitebait

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FORGOTTEN LESSON

SIR,—In your editorial "Forgotten Lesson" you raise the important question, among several others, of our attitude to the German industrialists. They are a dangerous class, but your article simplifies both their harmful effect in the past and their potential danger.

First, all mention of "private enterprise," as far as security is concerned, is irrelevant. The managerial class that came to power in 1942 under Alfred Speer—Walter Rohland, Wilhelm Zangen, Otto Steinbrinck, for example—was surely more dangerous than the previous owner class, such as Ernst Poensgen, Paul Reusch and Günter Henle. State control was more dangerously efficient than private enterprise.

Secondly, there is no sign that nationalisation now, imposed on the Germans, would bring greater security. The trade unionists and democratic politicians are more nationalist than the industrialists, who realise that their future is tied up with foreign customers and the Marshall Plan.

Thirdly, we must get the Ruhr going, at any rate for Europe's sake. Can no technicians or managers who were active since 1933 be used? Must the Ruhr be entrusted to works councillors and party politicians? Can't those technicians who, however misguidedly, helped their country during the war be given an opportunity to reconstruct a peaceful German economy?

Fourthly, the Trade Union Federation of the British Zone has made no energetic protest against the re-establishment of the present leaders of German heavy industry, such as Heinrich Dinkelbach, Max Müller, Hans-Güther Sohl, Wilhelm Zangen and Heinrich Kost. The only Trade Union outburst has been against Hermann Reusch who was not a Nazi, but was foolish enough to oppose the more radical demands of the workers, and the Military Government policy of the segregation of the steel trusts. The reason for Communist attacks is obvious enough: they want to obstruct the rebuilding of the Ruhr.

Fifthly, the difference between Heinrich Dinkelbach and Friedrich Flick is obvious to most people in the Ruhr. Flick was an unscrupulous financier, Dinkelbach was an employee of Vereinigte Stahlwerke, and has served Military Government faithfully for two-and-a-half years, to the disgust of the trusts. (Flick sold his indirect interests in V.St. in 1932.) Some industrialists are better than others: it seems to serve no useful purpose to attack the few good ones.

I do not want to appear as an advocate of the industrialists; they have far more power than is good for them; they have a reputation for political incompetence. That is why four different international boards are being set up to see that they do not work against the European interest.

A STUDENT OF THE RUHR

MEN OVER THE WATER

SIR,—I have read with much interest Mr. Aylmer Vallance's article on E.V.W.'s in this country and the different categories of men that they comprise. He has put his finger on one of the keys to the problem—Education. The other, I would submit, is Hope. As hope for better things—a better job, better living conditions, reunion with their families—is replaced by disillusionment and despair, then indeed these men may well resort to black market activities, political conspiracy, even suicide.

There is one group in which this disillusionment need not, and should not, occur—the students. My Committee, International Student Service, has recently begun to make contact with the students among the E.V.W.'s in order to put them into touch with British students and to give them information regarding evening studies and correspondence courses. We have noted their tremendous desire to complete their studies and also their appreciation of the difficulties that beset all students in this country—our overcrowded Universities and lack of financial resources. At the same time they all most sincerely believe that it is possible to change their jobs, with Ministry of Labour approval, after one year's employment here and are eager to do this in order to find jobs that make work and study possible.

The main difficulties that they face at the moment are the strenuous nature of their work, which in the mines, brickworks and heavy industries is exhausting and makes study in the evenings very difficult, and the problem of overcrowded living conditions where frequently 5–20 men share one hut. This makes concentration impossible. Opportunities of lectures run by the L.E.A.s and the W.E.A. vary with the locality and the initiative of the Hostel's Welfare Officer—some of whom are excellent.

As far as the students with whom we are in touch are concerned, their main interest is certainly not political, and we are sure that, if only they could be assured that in a year or two's time they would have an opportunity to study and pursue professions or other work more allied to their ability and training, they would be well satisfied and settle down into valuable members of our community.

International Student Service. KATHLEEN HARRISON

THE CHILD LISTENER

SIR,—The Australian Broadcasting Commission has been conducting for the past six or seven years a "Kindergarten of the Air" on the lines suggested by your correspondent. The session has been an unqualified success.

Beginning in the early war years, when committees of the Free Kindergarten Movement in Perth, Western Australia, were faced with the evacuation of children from populous areas and consequent cessation of their work, they asked the A.B.C. if they would broadcast a Kindergarten Session each morning. With some misgivings, the Broadcasting Commission consented, auditioned Kindergarten teachers, and began an experimental session in Perth.

From the very first, its popularity seemed assured and it was soon extended on a nation-wide basis. Mothers reported children, normally inattentive, sitting entranced in front of the loudspeaker, dancing, joining in song and movement, and happily continuing with directed activities after the sessions finished. Even two and three-year-olds were found to be joining in the singing games and nursery rhymes.

The session lasts for 25 minutes—the final few minutes often including a few notes for the mother to help her prepare material for directed activities. It was extended from a 15-minute session because of the large number of requests.

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The Kindergarten broadcaster has always in mind the danger of passive listening, and encourages the children to join in with her, or with children in the studio; encourages them to use their eyes and hands as well as their ears. The session has been used with advantage in hospitals for spastic patients.

The session is carefully planned in conjunction with Advisory Committees from the Kindergarten Union, who screen all the material used, and see that all the activities suggested accord with the best practice in Kindergarten teaching.

T. W. BEARUP,
Overseas Representative,
Australian Broadcasting Commission
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SIR,—May I add a few words to the plea of Mrs. B. H. Brandes in your Correspondence columns last week for Toddlers' Time on the air?

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pages, airily preening itself as if, Sir, your esteemed journal were as cosy a nest as *The Nursery World*—to find this affects me with the kind of dismay I should feel were I to read a tribute to the gastronomical delights of Dainty Teas in a contribution by Mr. Cyril Connolly; or to find the phrases "fragrant romance," "winsome heroine" enthusiastically applied in the critical articles of Miss Hester Chapman and Miss Julia Strachey; or were I to be told that Miss Rose Macaulay writes the mating-calls that advertise Black Magic chocolates; or you, Sir, the dialogues nostalgically evoking the imperialist flavour of Rose's Lime Juice.

But let this pass. A mother myself, though doubtless an old-fashioned one, I wish to take up two cudgels on behalf of that struggling and only relatively articulate section of the community or now commonly classed as Toddlers. Why should they be thus singled out for degradation? Because creatures under five are invariably ridiculous? This is no answer. Even that most ignoble of human products, the baby, is still dignified by the name of Infant.

If, as I fear, it is too late to restore to these hapless specimens their birthright of human dignity, may I suggest to you, and to the B.B.C., *a policy of general down-levelling and fragmentation,* at once juster and more in harmony with contemporary social trends? Let there be, as prelude to Toddlers' Time, Dribblers' Time. Let this perhaps be followed by Stumpers' Time. Then leaving the wee folk adequately catered for, let us consider Times for our lads and lasses as they galumph or shuffle towards adolescence. Bearing in mind the natural teen-age tendency towards sex-segregation, let Gigglers' Time (girls only) be provided; and Wrigglers' Time (boys only). And so forth through the stages of our earthly pilgrimage, until we reach Totterers' Time—a programme sympathetically devoted to the special needs of our Old Folk.

ROSAMOND LEHMANN

Little Wittenham, Abingdon, Berks.

MAN OF BLOOD

SIR,—In your issue of last week Dr. A. J. P. Taylor was criticised by Professor Laski for having "sacrificed the complexity of truth to the attractiveness of a brilliant aphorism." He seems to make a habit of this, for in his article in the same issue Dr. Taylor wrote, "The old order which Charles represented was legal and religious, or perhaps mystical; it was certainly not social or economic. There were no essential social differences between the two sides, and no conflict of economic policy unless it be that Cromwell and his associates were more old-fashioned in their views."

Whether this is brilliant or not I do not know, but, manifestly, there has been a sacrifice of truth. To ignore the violent social and economic class conflict which was the mainspring of the whole King-Parliament battle for a century, is to make that battle unintelligible, a fact which Dr. Taylor, inadvertently but most successfully, demonstrates in his article. One might equally say that there was no social or economic difference between the American Colonists and George the Third, between the Aristocrats and the Revolutionaries in the French Revolution, or between the Squirearchy and the Industrialists over the Reform Bill and Corn Laws.

15 Half Moon Street, O. H. PARSONS
Piccadilly, W.1.

SIR,—Mr. A. J. Taylor's view that "foreign observers regarded Cromwell as a plain adventurer, bent on autocracy," was no doubt true of Embassy and Ecclesiastical observers, but I suggest that in many cases oppressed peoples projected onto him their day dream of the liberator, as later was to occur in the case of Lenin. For instance, according to *Histoire d'Oliver Cromwell* (Paris: 1691) by F. Raguenet, a delegation of Levantine Jews, plus Rabbis from Prague and Amsterdam, visited England, ostensibly to discuss trade, but really to discover if the Protector was the long expected Messiah. They visited Huntingdon to discover if the genealogy of their hero showed Jewish ancestry. This story is repeated in *Bibliotheque Universelle* (Amsterdam: 1692) and though probably apocryphal, was symptomatic of the awe aroused by a Promethean disprover of Charles's: "A subject and a King are clean different."

Incidentally, Hitler's rise to power was preceded by best-selling eulogies of men of power—Caesar, Frederick the Great, Napoleon, etc. Can we not regard the burst of hagiographies of Charles I, in books and newspaper articles—the martyr whom we are told stood for the people against sectional interest, like the Kings of France, according to Maurras, and the Fascist leaders according to their followers—as also symptomatic?

J. S. BARWELL

25 Brunswick Square, London, W.C.1.

IRISH CENSORSHIP

SIR,—It will seem ungracious of me not to feel flattered by Critic's puff in his Irish Diary. I am not a bit touchy, yet I found his remarks about me as a person extremely familiar—and stupid. How awful! Critic will no doubt say; when I try to give the man's book a boost, bring his name to the notice of the readers of THE NEW STATESMAN & NATION, he takes offence. How perverse, stage-Irish, natural and ploughmanish! No publicity can compensate for familiarity; and I should much prefer, as hitherto, to be ignored by your journal than exhibited as a strange animal discovered by a visiting journalist. I am sorry, for possibly Critic meant well, but he achieved ill as we all do when we talk idly. If any of your reviewers should write of a "natural" poet, sack him.

Articles like Critic's Irish Diary are powerful stimulants to wavering Catholics. Is this hysterical non-thinking representative of the pagan outlook? The best thing to be said for prejudice is that it is insincere. Surely no sincere thinker holds that contraception is an ideal?

What is weakening my resolution as I write is that there was some truth in Critic's article. About the unofficial censorship, the whisper over the 'phone or dinner-table, which blacklists a man. Catholics in Ireland are aware of these sinister manifestations of frustrated mediocrity. Mediocrity in power, that is our problem, and we are hardly alone in our misfortune.

The fallacy in Critic's article is that like all journalists he accepts the melodramatic heresy of national distinctiveness as a spiritual reality. The universality of Catholicism (as of literature) is that it deals with people as people. Journalism, politics and other forms of immorality deal with people as regional phenomena. So newspapers and politicians are full of clamourous superficialities which seem important. Apparently not even a weekly review such as yours could afford to postulate true values—even if you knew them.

The politician who told Critic that he was "Anti-British" was a real stage-Irishman if Critic had but known. The opposite numbers to this self-deceiving mentality in England and elsewhere love these declarations of national dislikes; they have the unsubtle irrational quality which appeals to vulgar emotion, upon which mass-circulation newspapers and wars thrive.

PATRICK KAVANAGH

62 Pembroke Road, Dublin.

SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE, P.R.A.

SIR,—I am writing the life of Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A., and shall be grateful if any of your readers can help by affording me access to unpublished letters or other material of biographical interest. Any documents sent me will be examined and returned to their owners as quickly as possible and the utmost care will be taken of them.

DOUGLAS GOLDRING

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

The life of Lt.-Col. John Lilburne was so varied and exciting that it might well have inspired two or three biographies and at least one film. There is in all the records of English history no braver or more original figure than his. Dr. Gooch has truly said of him that he was the most popular personality in the days of the Commonwealth. Yet students of history have had to wait till 1949, three centuries after his premature death, for the first biography of this unusual man.

Miss Gibb* has searched all the records with equal industry and sympathy and she has a moving tale to tell. John, who came of an old land-owning family in Durham, had a rather scrappy education, and was apprenticed to the cloth trade in the City of London. Like most of the spirited young men of his generation, he came under Calvinist influences, turned to "Separatism" (or as we now call it, Congregationalism) and flung himself into the struggle against Laud and the bishops. Hoping to make some money, he went to Holland and there got printed, for smuggling into England, copies of Dr. Bastwick's *Litany*, a violent attack on the bishops. Betrayed by confederates, he had to face the Star Chamber in 1638. A youngster of 23, he improvised his defence, refused to recognise the jurisdiction of this Court, or to incriminate himself by answering questions. The penalty was a crippling fine, a public flogging followed by the pillory and imprisonment for an indefinite term in the Fleet prison. He bore the flogging with exemplary courage, and still had the audacity to fling several copies of the forbidden *Litany* to the crowd, and the daring to make a defiant speech from the pillory, until he was gagged. Far harder to endure was the imprisonment in irons among felons and the semi-starvation that followed. But he was now a popular hero, and when the Long Parliament met, Oliver Cromwell's maiden speech procured his release.

He rose rapidly in the Parliamentary army to the rank of Lt.-Colonel, experienced almost every possible adventure, and led his dragoons to victory at Marston Moor. He was so intimate with Cromwell at this time that they often (as he tells us) shared a bed. He acted for Cromwell in leading the attack on the half-hearted Parliamentary commander, the Earl of Manchester.

It would be tedious to recount all his doings in the confused political intrigues of the Civil War. He became a figure of the first importance when with a brilliant group of colleagues he organised the Leveller Party. Based first of all on the craftsmen of the City and Southwark, it soon spread to the New Model, and eventually to the voteless, copy-hold tenants of the Home Counties and East Anglia. It was the first party with a modern organisation in English history, with its weekly subscription, its elected committees, its whole-time propagandists, its two weekly papers and its sea-green badge. An open class conflict had begun between the conservative, propertied Puritans, led by Cromwell and Ireton, and the mass of craftsmen and peasants, led by Lilburne and Rainsborough. The Levellers were soon in conflict both with the Long Parliament and the "grandees" of the army. Their programme was amazingly advanced. They demanded the formal recognition of certain fundamental liberties, manhood suffrage, annual parliaments, free and universal education, provision for the aged and the sick, prison reform, and finally a reform of land tenure, which would have done for the English peasantry what the Great Revolution did for the French. With stubborn courage the Levellers stood for a secular State and unlimited toleration. The classical Liberal historians underestimated the strength of the Levellers. In 1647 they got, mainly in London, in round figures, 100,000 signatures to their great petition. The population of London was at this time barely 400,000. When it came to voting, they plainly had the New Model behind them. It was the prestige of Cromwell that restored its discipline.

The class conflict ended in Cromwell's victory as a conservative dictator. Twice Lilburne was tried for his life and twice a London jury acquitted him. In the end Cromwell banished him to a gloomy prison in Jersey, as Laud had banished Prynne. The Levellers were suppressed and only a few irreconcilables were still active, conspiring underground, intriguing with the Cavaliers and plotting the Lord Protector's murder. Their Left Wing fought on for a time in the Diggers' Communist movement and bequeathed, as their lasting legacy, Winstanley's books, inspired partly by the Leveller programme and partly by More's *Utopia*. Lilburne turned away at last from politics and was converted to Quakerism. Physically broken by prison, he died at the early age of 43 and was buried as a Quaker.

No one is likely to question Miss Gibbs' scholarly disentangling of the facts of Lilburne's career. Her reading of his personality is more doubtful. Was he, as she thinks, primarily a "Christian Democrat," whose inspiration came from religion? Certainly, like most Protestant writers of his day, he quoted the Bible incessantly. Certainly, when he lay in irons in the Fleet prison, his one consolation was religion. But his reasons for detesting bishops may have been chiefly secular. Archbishop Laud, during the decade of personal rule, was creating a theocracy. He dominated the Privy Council (the Cabinet of that epoch); three bishops sat in the Star Chamber; Bishop Juxon was at the head of the Treasury; Convocation was usurping legislative powers. My own impression of Lilburne is that from 1642, when he entered the army, down to 1655, when he turned Quaker, his motives and outlook were predominantly secular. He was never the conventional "saint," drab, ascetic and introverted. He wore his hair long, like any cavalier, and after he left the army, he still wore his dragoon's scarlet coat. When the malicious Puritan Edwards said of him in *Gangraena* may have been more or less true; that he played sports on the Sabbath day and enjoyed a bottle of wine and a game of cards. None of his friends and colleagues were "puritans." William Walwyn rejected all dogmas, used the Socratic method and revelled in Montaigne and Lucian. Richard Overton was not, as is often said, a "materialist," but certainly his outlook was rationalist. John Wildman has been labelled by his able biographer, Maurice Ashley, an "agnostic." Lilburne's first colonel, Lord Brooke, whom Miss Gibb barely mentions, was a Platonic idealist and a brave pioneer of toleration. Henry Marten, the Republican pioneer, though he was never a Leveller, was Lilburne's close friend and ally, and his way of life scandalised both Cromwell and King Charles. Lilburne was an impulsive character who quarrelled easily but forgave promptly. His popularity was due as much to his very human personality as to his courage.

Finally, he turned Quaker. Why? Miss Gibb disputes the obvious explanation. My own reading is that, like the Diggers, he came to see the futility both of fighting and of politics. He had tried both, but in the end England got a dictator as arbitrary as Wentworth and Laud, and much more efficient. And so Lilburne turned to religion and the Inner Light. The Quakers in the 17th century played the part that the Wesleyans played in the 18th; they provided an other-worldly alternative to revolution.

The difficulty of writing a good biography of Lilburne is that one cannot isolate his share in the Leveller movement from that of his colleagues. Lilburne was by temperament the fighting leader, the driving will, and the popular figurehead. But Walwyn and Overton were in intellect his superiors; they had a wider cultural outlook and they were better writers. Lilburne was an individualist radical. But Walwyn was in outlook a Communist, though he could not see how to realise his ideals. He and Overton may have contributed most to the advanced social programme of the Levellers. Then there were the two influential soldiers, Rainsborough and Sexby, who propagated Leveller ideas in France.

What, then, was Lilburne's specific gift to our English tradition? Miss Gibb makes too little of it. We owe it to him that English legal procedure differs fundamentally from that of the Continent. If we assume that a man must be treated as innocent till he is proved guilty; if we reject the interrogation of suspects; if we look to witnesses for the proof of guilt; if we make no effort to extort a confession, it is, above all, Lilburne and his defiant resistance that we have to thank for it. In any estimate of this brave man's achievement this should come first. Secondly, Lilburne invented the idea of defining certain fundamental liberties in the form of a social contract, the "Agreement of the People." This idea of a written constitution never took root in England, but it throve in America and France.

Finally, Miss Gibb has paid too little attention to the attitude of the Leveller movement to the land question. She tells us that Cromwell invented the nickname "Leveller." No; the word was much older. The original Levellers were the peasants who tore down the fences erected by enclosing landlords. Behind this advanced democratic movement was the far older instinctive quasi-Communism of the peasants, who tried in vain to defend their open fields and commons against the new rich, who were represented as much by Cromwell as by the infamous Warwick, who crushed Ket's rebellion in the previous century with foreign mercenaries.

Few of our historians have yet faced frankly the class issue in the revolutionary struggle. If we ignore the reaction that followed the Restoration for 28 years, it ended the divine right of kings and established religious toleration. But the biggest change of all was the victory of property and the gradual acquisition of the land by capitalistic owners. Even after the Restoration most of the speculators and City merchants who had acquired the estates of the feudal "malignant" families during the Civil War and the Commonwealth were left in possession of them. The convinced Communists among the Levellers, who carried on the Anabaptist tradition and wished, like the militants of Münster and the pacifist Moravian Brethren, to establish communities on the early Christian model, were never numerous. But the Party did seriously intend to recover and develop the common lands and use them to endow schools and hospitals. They also understood (as Rousseau did, a century later) that democracy will not work if a serious inequality of incomes prevails. This (rather than a literal equalisation of property) was what "Levelling" actually meant. A prevalent idea among the troopers of the New Model was that incomes should be limited: a peer might enjoy £2,000 per annum as a maximum; other incomes were to be scaled down proportionately. Harrington, who was not a Leveller, though he was Wildman's ally, advocated a similar idea in *Oceana* in a more workable form when he proposed that no one should own land above a capital value of £2,000. He was almost a Marxist in his realisation that economic power determines political power.

Lilburne's defeat meant much more than the postponement of manhood suffrage for nearly three centuries. The real defeat of the Levellers was their failure to turn "customary" tenants into free-holders. Had that happened, English farmers would have become as independent and upstanding as the French peasant owners. The defeat in 1656 for the first time in English Parliamentary history of a Bill directed against enclosure revealed the real mind of the Puritan revolution. "What," Cromwell asked, "is the purport of the levelling principle but to make the tenant as liberal a fortune as the landlord? I was by birth a gentleman. You must cut these people in pieces, or they will cut you in pieces." Property won its battle for eight or nine generations when Lilburne was banished to Jersey. Among the heroic leaders of English democracy he had no successor, until Robert Owen renewed the struggle.

H. N. Brailsford

John Lilburne, the Leveller; A Christian Democrat. By M. A. Gibb. *Lindsay Drummond.* 18s.

INTERNAL MONSTERS

Contributions to Psychoanalysis 1921—1945.
By MELANIE KLEIN. *Hogarth Press.* 21s.

The blind spots of a genius are almost as incomprehensible as his dazzling insights. The work of Sigmund Freud transformed the thinking of the Western world, and a most important aspect of his work was the discovery of the overwhelming importance of the vicissitudes of childhood for the development of adult character. But Freud always reconstructed these vicissitudes; it never seems to have occurred to him to study them while they were happening to the child. In *The Interpretation of Dreams* he recounts a few very simple dreams from his own children and dismisses them as "without interest"; even in the famous case of Little Hans, the prototype of all child analysis, Freud actually saw the little patient only for two short interviews. There seem two possible explanations for this very strange gap: the analysis of children's behaviour relies overwhelmingly on the interpretation of visual evidence (play, drawings and so on) and Freud relied almost entirely on verbal data; and it seems probable that Freud retained the mid-Victorian, mittel-Europa, middle-class belief that a proper man can have nothing to do, and can do nothing, with small children. They pertain exclusively to the women's domain.

The major advances in psychoanalysis since Freud laid the foundations have been produced by women observing and analysing small children, above all by the late Mrs. von Hug-Hellmuth, Anna Freud and Melanie Klein, both the latter now working in England. Their contributions have been of a very different nature; Miss Freud has sharpened, but not otherwise modified, Freud's construct of the development of the infantile psyche, and has made her most noteworthy advances in the study of the development and strengthening of the ego, a portion of the personality to which Freud devoted relatively little attention. Mrs. Klein on the other hand has almost completely transformed the construct of the unconscious, although she has used the same terms with vastly modified referents—a source of unnecessary confusion. Since her first visit to England twenty years ago, Mrs. Klein's ideas have been accepted by a great number of English psychoanalysts, and the corpus of her ideas is often referred to as "the British school of psychoanalysis"; consequently this collection of her scattered papers, which shows the development of her ideas, is a publication of major importance to all who are interested in the subject. It is her second book; *The Psychoanalysis of Children* was published sixteen years ago.

To demonstrate the novelty of Mrs. Klein's ideas, it is necessary to outline very briefly Freud's original hypotheses. The infant is born with two biological instincts, Eros and Thanatos, the life-instinct and the death-instinct, libido and aggression. It starts life in a state of primary narcissism, completely under the sway of the pleasure-principle; with maturation the chief organ of pleasure moves from the mouth to the anus to the phallus. Only when the phallic stage is reached does the infant enter into object relations with other people in the form of the Oedipus complex; when the Oedipus wishes are finally abandoned the child incorporates the rewarding and punishing aspects of the parental figures as the super-ego.

Mrs. Klein has either completely abandoned the concept of primary narcissism or reduced it to a few weeks (she is silent on this point); and the object relationships, the beginning of the Oedipus complex and the incorporation of parental imagos which Freud placed in the third to sixth year of life, Mrs. Klein places in the fourth to fifth *month*. She has not apparently changed the date of the termination of these processes, though in a paper dated 1927 she writes, "a three-year old child has left behind him the most important part of the development of the Oedipus complex."

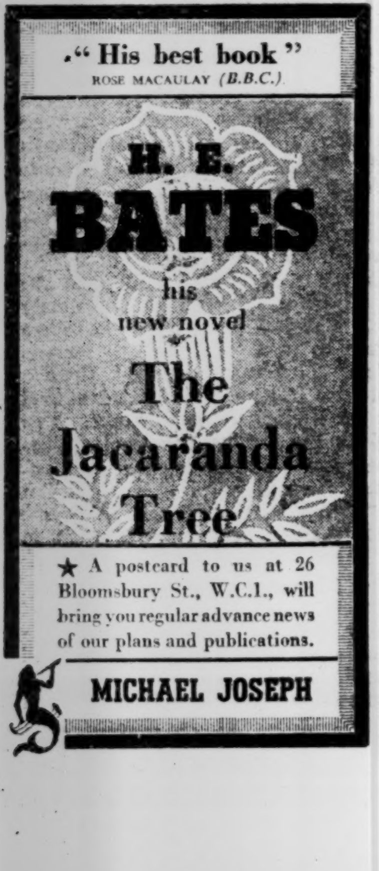
According to Mrs. Klein the infant reacts to deprivation (typically, weaning) in two very important ways: it fantasies that it has incorporated inside itself the "good" breast as a recompense for the deprivation, and it directs the most extreme sadistic wishes against the "bad" breast and depriving mother, imagining it and her eaten up, swallowed, and otherwise tortured and killed. These sadistic wishes provoke guilt and anxiety, the fear of retaliation in kind; to make this anxiety endurable the infant also incorporates the "bad" breast and sadistic mother, leaving the external mother a tolerable object. This process of incorporation, sadistic wishing and projection is also applied to the father and parts of the father; as the child begins to grow and gets greater control of its body and suffers increasing deprivation by training, so its sadistic fantasies change; in particular it sees in its excreta something which can burn, drown, poison or putrefy the object of its hatred; and these wishes and the fears from their projection, in their turn, become introjected.

Once these "good" and "bad" objects and part-objects become part of the unconscious they have as it were an autonomous life of their own, threatening the incorporator and his "good" objects with the most dire punishments for disapproved behaviour or desires; under unfavourable circumstances the "bad" objects can even threaten to destroy or contaminate the "good" objects. Far from being psychologically uninhibited, the infant and young child is under the domination of fantastically severe "internal monsters," the prototype of the super-ego. The infant lives through phases or "positions" of a similar nature to psychoses or insanities in adult life; the mad man is under complete, the neurotic under partial control of these archaic internal monsters; and psychoanalysis consists of lessening the severity of these figures by bringing them to consciousness and re-evaluating them in the light of later experiences of reality.

To my mind, the acceptability of these constructs depends on their congruence with a coherent and economic theory of human behaviour and motivation. I do not think they can be proved or disproved by evidence from psychoanalysis, for the nature of the transference is such that the patient will almost inevitably produce material congruent with the analyst's predispositions. For Jungians patients will develop "racial memories" and never an internalised object; for Kleinians they will litter the analytic couch with internalised bits and pieces.

From my point of view, Mrs. Klein's theory has the great advantage over Freud's in its stress on the essentially social nature of human personality; for her, relationships with other people are dominant from the start. The great disadvantage is the objectifying of psychological concepts, which has always been one of the besetting dangers of psychoanalysis; when dealing with the mental processes which occur before the acquisition of speech the result appears highly implausible. In one footnote, Mrs. Klein appears to acknowledge that she is dealing in metaphors; but in the text the internalised objects are concrete and almost palpable.

Her insistence on the recovery of the earliest infantile memories makes adult psychoanalysis excessively long, cumbersome and expensive; in a full working life an analyst can deal with only about eighty adult patients. The chief therapeutic value of Kleinian analysis would seem to lie in



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Marc Bloch was a medieval historian with a world-wide reputation. He served as a Staff Officer with the First French Army in 1939/40, and saw the final, fatal campaign at close range. During the occupation he joined—when well over fifty—the French Resistance Movement and was caught, tortured and shot by the Germans. This book, in which he considers with the fine detachment of an historian, the many causes that contributed to the downfall of France, was written during his period of enforced inactivity after the French surrender. It is remarkable, not only for its shrewd insight into movements and motives, but for the magnificent absence from it of all violence, bitterness or despair, though it was written when such feelings might have been expected and pardoned.

Oxford University Press

its original development, the psychoanalysis of children; if Mrs. Klein's concept of the psychotic phases of infantile development is correct, its wide application should lower the incidence of adult psychosis.

The interested reader can note from the successive papers in this book how Mrs. Klein has gradually pushed back the beginnings of the formation of the super-ego and the start of the Oedipus complex; from the traditional Freudian position in 1919, to the second year in 1927, to the first year in 1928, to the fourth or fifth month in 1934.

In her devotion to the exploration of the unconscious, Mrs. Klein tends to ignore all the social or realistic questions involved. In her first paper she stresses the desirability of bringing up children as atheists (to discourage their "omnipotence of thought"), and her disagreements on child analysis with Anna Freud turned on the fact that Miss Freud thought that the child's current relationships with its family should be taken into continuous account, whereas Mrs. Klein maintained that the freeing of the child's unconscious should be the only consideration. It is true that she claims that this also improves the child's current relationships, but one has the strong feeling that she would not be deflected if this were not the case.

It is interesting to note that Mrs. Klein's constructs develop from cultural arrangements: the responses to early weaning from the breast, to imposition of toilet-training in the first year of life, to physical separation from the mother and to modesty which permits only fragmentary and surreptitious knowledge of parental intercourse and the genitals of the opposite sex; for humanity as a whole these are all unusual experiences. They are chiefly confined to infants born in countries on the shores of the Atlantic.

GEOFFREY GORER

A CORRESPONDENCE

Why Do I Write? An Exchange of Views Between ELIZABETH BOWEN, GRAHAM GREENE and V. S. PRITCHETT. *Percival Marshall.* 6s.

The novelist's relation to his public, society's obligations to the novelist, the novelist's rights, the novelist's duties: how many thousands of words have been poured out upon these subjects during the past fifteen years? More, I imagine, than in all the two hundred years that preceded them. They were not problems that bothered our ancestors greatly, though, had they been posed, the answers would have come pat enough. In varying terms, Defoe, Richardson, Fielding and the rest would have echoed Trollope:

> The writer of stories must please, or he will be nothing. And he must teach whether he wish to teach or no. . . . The novelist, if he have a conscience must preach his sermons with the same purpose as the clergyman. . . .

Though at the mention of sermons and clergymen one or two of them at least would have winked: they knew, none better, just how much the novelist can get away with by pretending to be a moralist. But for the most part the novelists of the past, the great Victorians especially, existed in an almost symbiotic relationship with their public; hence their assurance and much of their power: they could take the social importance of what they were doing for granted. Nor were their immediate successors, men like Stevenson and Gissing and James, much less fortunate, for all their greater self-consciousness: whatever doubts they might have disappeared as soon as they jumped on the back of the high horse of art. It was left to the novelists of the Thirties to develop the guilty conscience, to behave as though there were more virtue in signing a manifesto or chalking a slogan on the pavement than writing fiction. "Who live under the shadow of a war, What can I do that matters?" The answer seems pretty obvious now, but it must be admitted it didn't in 1936, and the answer one got was, "Almost anything but getting on with the job of writing novels."

The causes that provoked the novelist's guilty conscience are easy to isolate: the breakdown of the liberal tradition, the seductive influence of Marxism, the spectacle of mass unemployment, the rise of fascism, the threat of war. Indeed, the atmosphere of the Thirties was already largely a war atmosphere, and in the prevailing hysteria many a novelist echoed sentiments akin to that of the passionate lady in the poem of the 1914–1918 war: "And I can only sit at home and sew!" To-day, as may be seen from this brilliant and provocative exchange of letters between Miss Bowen, Mr. Greene and Mr. Pritchett, the nature of the problem of the novelist's relation to society has changed. The contemporary position is well put by Mr. Pritchett in his preface:

> He (the writer) has seen the totalitarian censorships of Europe. He sees in Soviet Russia the attempt to raise writing to one of the most highly paid and exalted positions in the State, at the deadly price of State-direction and State-censorship. He sees in America a literature which has been commercialised to an extent never before known. And in Britain, where his freedom is not shouldered out in these ways, he finds he is annulled in effect by the inflation and the shortage of paper. What chiefly disturbs him is that socialism, the managerial revolution, planning—or whatever the current specific is called—holds out the hand of rescue: but if he grasps it, he is likely to be pulled into the unventilated corridors of official culture. Are all the advantages of the enlightenment to be thrown away?

There is, too, another factor complicating the problem. Mr. Greene reminds us that Charlotte Brontë could say: "You will see that *Villette* touches on no matter of public interest." He comments:

> With us, however consciously unconcerned we are, it obtrudes through the cracks of our stories, terribly persistent like grass through cement. Processions can't help passing across the ends of our imaginary streets: our characters must earn a living: if they don't, what is called a social significance seems to attach itself to their not earning.

This may be put in another way: to-day, no novelist under forty-five can dodge, however much he may wish to, treating of war and depression, for they are the context in which his own experience exists; no use any longer quoting the precedent of Jane Austen and the Napoleonic wars. And this fact would seem to force upon the novelist a defined attitude to war and economic events, the more so since, as Miss Bowen says, readers tend to ask of him for some "response to the challenge of the times." On the reason for this demand Miss Bowen is most perceptive:

> You make a society every time you write a story. In fact, you are in closer relation to the characters in the story than you will ever be to anyone in real life. It is this ideal relationship of intimacy and power which is to fascinate those who read. Fascinate and delude. They expect this capacity for relationship to be extended outside the written page, to them. To, as they put it, society as a whole.

And of course they are disappointed, because that part of the man which writes his novels is not the citizen or the intellectual but the self-communing solitary; as Mr. Pritchett says: "At some point he (the writer) splits off from the people who surround him and he discovers the necessity of talking to himself and not to them."

So the fundamental problem discussed in *Why Do I Write?* is: How in the modern world, whether typified by the Soviet Union or the United States, is the writer to keep his freedom to talk to himself, with all that this implies of dissent from majority opinion or the dictates of the state, and yet survive? Mr. Pritchett, who, it seems, has been accused of suffering from an unbecoming obsession with money, is, with some

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JONATHAN CAPE

reservations, for the state helping the writer with subsidies, endowments and scholarships. He seems to take for granted the continuance of a liberal social democracy. Mr. Greene, our most intransigently nonconformist novelist since D. H. Lawrence, will have none of it. For him the state, and not only the state but "the society within society," the organised political party, the organised church, is always the enemy. To accept no favours, he says, is "a duty the artist unmistakably owes to society." Otherwise, how can he expect to be allowed to fulfil his other duty, the duty of disloyalty?

> Isn't disloyalty (asks Mr. Greene) as much the writer's virtue as loyalty is the soldier's? For the writer, just as much as the Christian Church, is the defender of the individual. The soldier, the loyal man, stands for the mass interment, the common anonymous grave, but the writer stands for the uneconomic, probably unhealthy, overcrowded little graveyard, with the stone crosses preserving innumerable names.

And that indeed is how the novelist emerges from all these letters, from Miss Bowen's and Mr. Pritchett's no less than from Mr. Greene's, as the representative, the spokesman, of the individual, the private person. It is implied that the greater the power of the state becomes, the more important will become the novelist's function. He is compared to a Resistance man, whose "only strength is that he can keep on fighting and running away, his weakness that he may betray under political or commercial pressure." The measure of agreement between the three correspondents is impressive; all would concur with Mr. Greene's statement of the novelist's task: to elicit sympathy by drawing "his own likeness to any human being, the guilty as well as the innocent." From this the nature of his relation to society follows. It consists precisely of the novels he writes. As to his survival, "Man will always"—the words are Mr. Greene's—"find a means to gratify a passion He will write, as he will commit adultery, in spite of taxation."

WALTER ALLEN

NEW NOVELS

The Jacaranda Tree. By H. E. BATES. *Michael Joseph.* 9s. 6d.

The Snow Pasture. By P. H. NEWBY. *Jonathan Cape.* 9s.

Once at school I was set to translate those poems of Ovid which treat of his banishment to Tomi, on the remote and barbarous Danube. The description of the storm at sea exhilarated me strangely. Then suddenly the spell was broken, for I came upon a pentameter which talked of a monstrous wave "between the ninth and the eleventh." Why, O why, not the "tenth" quite simply? But no. He had, I supposed, to spin it out. I never again could read Ovid with real confidence. It was my first encounter with "fatal facility."

The qualities of fatal facility are special. It is not mere vapouring. Far from it. The Ancient Mariner has you fast by the lapel, his glittering eye makes doubly sure, and in any case you feel no desire to run away, not even definite boredom. It is just regret that a voice so practised has no longer much of consequence to say.

With such regrets does Mr. Bates' new book, *The Jacaranda Tree*, inspire me. Mr. Bates is certainly among the most accomplished literary draftsmen of our times; he is master of narrative such as we rarely see these days; he has the faculty, so often invoked by publishers, so seldom encountered, of holding your attention as long as he chooses. All these admirable qualities are present in *The Jacaranda Tree*. Yet the result is strangely negative.

Once more the scene is Burma, but some three or four years earlier than *The Purple Plain* during the humiliating spring of disaster and retreat in 1942. In a small rice-growing district by the Irrawaddy a handful of English continue to grumble and flirt at the club and despise the Burmans. Behind the pallisade of their habits and prejudices they hardly listen to the news of Rangoon's fall and the end of the life which is for them the only reality. But they are all more or less in the hands of Paterson, the new manager of the rice-mill, who, fresh from England, is capable of recognising calamity when he sees it. He organises and leads them on a flight by car towards India.

Paterson is just a little too good to be true, of course. He is young, handsome, brave, sensible, unconventional. He refuses to join the club, he has a Burmese mistress who lives openly in his handsome bungalow; worst of all—an excellent and true touch, this—while the others go up to Mamu in the hot weather, Paterson, like the outsider he is, will wander off botanising in the Northern Shan States.

I do not say that Paterson is a purely mythical concentration of virtues, a mere symbol of Mr. Bates' revolt against an antiquated and monstrous social system. Certainly Patersons do exist, here and there, in the East, generally despised and distrusted by their compatriots. But a true Paterson almost invariably has some bee in his bonnet. It is perhaps the want in him of some amiable eccentricity which makes Mr. Bates' Paterson so shadowy a figure beside the self-willed party he is supposed to dominate.

Nevertheless, the opening pages of the book are excellent. There is something ludicrous and slightly touching about the spectacle of middle-class taboos preserved almost within hail of death. Mr. Bates obviously realises that if the Empire were won on the playing-fields of Eton, it was lost in just such Clubs as that which he here describes. From the scene where pretty amorous Mrs. Portman tries to keep up the ritual of club-life during the last hours before their flight from the town, Mr. Bates extracts the maximum of comedy. But he is also aware of the pathos inherent in it; because so typical, the Portmans and the McNairs are as tragically silly in their flight as was Louis XVI on the road to Varennes; and, like the King, or some expiring species, they come inevitably to disaster.

The formula of the novel, the sudden juxtaposition, through exterior and uncontrollable causes, of characters who would not normally seek each other's company, seems a trifle shabby to a writer of Mr. Bates' powers. It leads him fatally to situations of inverted sentimentality which may be the stock-in-trade of your successful contributor to the American magazines, but look odd enough in their present context. The sudden decision of Miss Allison, the gentle half-caste nurse, to go back and face the dangers of a Japanese occupation, in order to help the cholera-ridden villages—is it Bates or Blomfield we are reading? And at the end, when the delirious Paterson is wheeled by his Burmese mistress and her brother across the bridge to India,

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we are left, for all Mr. Bates' persuasive voice, quite indifferent to their subsequent fate.

The trouble is, I suspect, the war has not done Mr. Bates any good. Of course, the R.A.F. stories by "Flying Officer X" were admirable of their kind; so for that matter were *Fair Stood the Wind for France* and *The Purple Plain*; it would take a long time for Mr. Bates' great gifts to be entirely squandered. But whereas smaller writers than he have thrived on the war, I cannot help feeling he has been slightly debauched by it. Perhaps in the disintegration and despair of these post-war years, he may find his health again. Meanwhile, *The Jacaranda Tree*, for all its virtues, evokes for me at once the successful American magazine serial—or Ovid on the way to Tomi.

Mr. P. H. Newby, though so far of smaller output than Mr. Bates, possesses a technical equipment hardly less dazzling. In his newest book, *The Snow Pasture*, there are passages of enchanting dexterity, notably the scene where the two boys hide the rifle in the derelict iron foundry. But at the end we are left again with a sense of disappointment, of frustration—not so much Ovid on the way to Tomi, but a suspicion that, while Mr. Newby knows how to go, he hardly knows where he is going.

The story is mainly concerned with a young prig of a doctor, Robert Pindar, his peevish but apparently beautiful wife, Evelyn, their son Benjamin, who rather understandably carries on a guerilla war against them, and the boy's friend Clem. In partnership with a very different sort of doctor, the sporting type, Pindar has unaccountably bought a practice in a smutty Welsh mining town. There, young Benjamin takes up with the miners' sons of his own age, and particularly with Clem Jones. He insists on leaving his "nice" school to be with his new friends. His mother in a fury carries him off to his grandfather's green fields in the Cotswolds; yet, despite the gift of a rifle, he yearns for the alleys and the dirty slopes of the mountains round his home; soon he runs away.

Assuming there were a reason for *The Snow Pasture* to begin, it is difficult to see why it should ever end. Robert and his wife bicker, their sex-life languishes, recovers, they bicker again; Benjamin is for ever getting lost, Clem gradually steals the hearts of the household, while inspiring a resentment bordering upon exasperation. The swift changes of mood from love to anger are admirably done, the stage skilfully set, what with the rattle of the tinplate works, the miners waiting silent round the cottage of some injured man, the brooks running black with coal-dust. In short, one is left feeling that very little is beyond Mr. Newby's powers. Yet here they are applied without conviction. Obviously Mr. Newby no more believes in Robert and Evelyn Pindar than we do. An embarrassed disbelief blurs his exact and curious observation and renders contradictory the charm of this respectable failure. In these days when any considerable writing must be a thankless travail, it must be small comfort for any novelist to be told we confidently expect one of these days a masterpiece from him. Nevertheless, let us say it to Mr. Newby.

SIMON HARCOURT-SMITH

SOVIET ZONE

A Nation Divided. By HEINRICH FRAENKEL. *Dennis Yates.* 2s. 6d.

This little book contains one of the most illuminating accounts of Germany to appear since the end of the war. It is not a documented account of the division of Germany, though it starts with a short re-statement of events from Potsdam to the air-lift. Rather, it is the informal story of Mr. Fraenkel's personal experiences in Germany, drawn from many visits since 1945. The value of the book springs from his objective approach to all that he saw and heard, and the wide range of his search. In spite of the enormous quantity of words that have been written on Germany since the end of the war, two subjects in particular, have eluded most writers: the state of mind of the Germans to-day, and conditions in the Soviet Zone. They have not eluded Mr. Fraenkel. He devotes most of his book to his observations on these two aspects of Modern Germany.

The distorted accounts of the Soviet Zone that have appeared since 1945 were the inevitable result of Soviet attempts to seal off their zone hermetically from the West, as far as allied observers were concerned. Western journalists have been admitted in groups for conducted tours, but the scope of such visits was limited. This Soviet policy placed a premium on German information, since Germans alone were free to come and go between the Soviet Zone and Berlin. This information was usually unreliable in the highest degree, owing to the favourite German sport of blackening one occupying power in the eyes of another. In view of this unfortunate situation, Mr. Fraenkel set out to obtain as much first-hand information as possible during the last three years. After much persistence, he obtained permission to visit the Soviet Zone officially alone with the inevitable conducting officer, who nevertheless, allowed him many private conversations with Germans. But he also made various day trips from Berlin in the days when the controls between the Soviet Sector of Berlin and the Soviet Zone were less stringent than they are now. And most valuable, being a German by birth, he was able to turn himself into a German journalist, on an assignment from a German paper, which enabled him to visit the zone unaccompanied for a short period.

The result of these visits is a balanced account of the Soviet Zone. That it is a police state, he has no doubt, producing among its opponents such tragic illusions as that held by one family he visited that the Brigade of Guards would march one day to liberate them. He sees clearly that the democratic trappings—the opposition parties and their papers—serve only to disguise the one-party state of the S.E.D. But his dislike of these aspects of the Zone does not blind him to achievements in education, land reform, the rebuilding of towns and the settlement of Germans displaced from the East. However, so far, land reform seems to be only a qualified success. He reports his surprise at the lack of enthusiasm of the new peasants about owning their own land. It is surprising also that he found that the co-operative use of agricultural machinery was not working out well in practice. These things he discovered on his unofficial visits. During his official visit, he found among other things, that the Meissen china factory at Dresden was in full production. He was offered two sets of famous "cobalt-blue and gold" for himself and the Editor of this journal. He refused. I hope the Editor admires his integrity, particularly since, as the German manager so truly remarked, it would merely have meant two less sets for the black market.

The Soviet Zone is difficult to assess, largely because it is shrouded in secrecy. The German mind is difficult to assess for quite other reasons. It is always dangerous to generalise about any nation, but the Germans complicate the issue by their chameleon-like habit of adopting the prevailing colour of their surroundings, witness the total disappearance almost over night of self-confessed Nazis in 1945. Mr. Fraenkel, a German himself, is able to talk to them in their own language and idiom, and to penetrate this disguise. Most of his visits to Germany were concerned with education. This brought him into contact with all those trying to re-educate the Germans. He

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completed his studies by a tour of prisoner-of-war camps in this country, where at last he did find a convinced and unashamed Nazi. His vision of his own countrymen is neither sentimental nor harsh, and it is deeply penetrating. His conclusions are not encouraging. It is still too early to tell what sort of Germany will emerge from these first difficult years of occupation and forced education in "democracy," with the conflicting interpretations of that much abused word. But it will be a miracle indeed if the future Germany were to become a stable progressive and democratic force. Max Reimann, the Western Communist leader, may yet prove to be right, when he suggested last week that the German people will come to regard all those who worked with the occupation powers as Quislings. But if such a time does come, the S.E.D. leaders will not be exempt.

Anne Whyte

BLAKE

The Life of William Blake. By Mona Wilson. *Rupert Hart Davis.* 21s.

This biography, first published in 1927, does not supersede Gilchrist's delightful *Life,* but Miss Wilson has painstakingly collected material from other sources, and this new edition must be regarded as the most complete book on the subject now available. Miss Wilson has done great service to scholarship by her thorough winnowing of some of the damaging legends that have grown up around the great visionary. She gives full documentation of the growth of the story of Blake's supposed confinement in Bedlam in such a way as to leave no doubt of its absolute untruth. In the present edition she has had to deal with another legend, initiated by Ellis and Yeats, and recently given a new lease of life in an unscholarly little book by H. C. Witcutt, that Blake's father was Irish. She perpetuates, however, another theory, that now seems to be unlikely, that Blake wrote the plates of his poems in mirror writing. Ruthven Todd, in a note in the Canadian review *Here and Now,* December 1947, refers to a method, which he intends shortly to publish, which Juan Miro has tried out in plates that are reproduced: this is almost certainly the solution of a long-standing puzzle.

A fourth piece of Blake apocrypha, the famous discovery of Mr. and Mrs. Blake naked, in their vine-arbour, caused more anxiety in the last century than it does in this. It is quite in keeping with Blake's theory that the ancient Britons were "naked civilised men." Miss Wilson leaves the question open. I have been told by Mr. Arthur Richmond, grandson of Blake's friend George Richmond the painter, that his grandfather fully accepted the story, and handed it on to members of his family with the added charming detail that Mr. and Mrs. Blake were wearing *helmets.*

One hopes that further light may yet be thrown on some important aspects of Blake's life. J. B. Bronowski's account of the poet's social background, and Ruthven Todd's excellent essay on Blake and the Mythologists, leave us still with unanswered questions. What was the source of Blake's knowledge of Gnosticism, and where and when did he become familiar with Hindoo art and literature? Could he conceivably have known anything of Buddhism? Professor Saurat hints at secret societies, but what were these?

Less valuable than her biographical material are Miss Wilson's summaries and interpretations of the Prophetic Books. Since Ellis and Yeats first broached the subject much valuable work has been done by J. Wicksteed, Foster Damon, Milton O. Percival, Sloss and Wallis, and others. But the time for a standard exposition of Blake's system has not yet come, and Miss Wilson's interpretations must be regarded as provisional.

Kathleen Raine

GRAMOPHONE NOTES

Symphonies. Schubert: No. 7 in C major (Vienna Phil/Karajan. LX1138-43); Tchaikovsky: No. 5 in E minor (LPO/Celibadache. AK2036-41). Those who had high hopes of the first of these issues will, I'm afraid, be seriously disappointed. Of all the post-war recordings of the Vienna Philharmonic this is by far the least satisfactory. There is continuous distortion in the upper register, and the violin tone, at anything above mezzo-piano, is horribly scrawny. Karajan's reading is unobjectionable, but he does not give me the impression that he *loves* the work. No doubt a better recording will come out sooner or later; meanwhile, the pre-war Walter set (HMV) is beautifully played and still sounds well enough. The self-conscious drama of Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony never fails to appeal to the vanity of temperamental musicians; there are many different interpretations of this symphony, and all are in some sense justifiable. That a straightforward reading is possible Constant Lambert has shown: I should still prefer his set (HMV) to all others, if the recording were better. As things are, however, I suppose I must recommend the new one, though I do so with an ill grace, for Sergiu Celibadache takes a sentimental view of the tempi (e.g., the announcement of the E minor theme, which is ridiculously slow), and is indulgent to lack of unanimity in the strings, especially in some pianissimo entries. But the performance has vigour and individuality, and the recording is excellent.

Concertos. Mozart: Piano Concerto C major (K503) (Edwin Fischer/Philharmonia/Krips. DB-6604-7); Brahms: Violin Concerto (Ossy Renardy/Concertgebouw/Münch. AK2055-9); Bartok: Concerto for Orchestra (Concertgebouw/Van Beinum. AK 2042-6); Handel-Wood Organ Concerto No. 9 B flat major (Thalben-Ball/Philharmonia/Süsskind. C3814-6). Opinions of Mozart's big C major Concerto (K503) have been—and perhaps always will be—opposed. It is among his most stiffly classical works: like one of Ingres' mythological pictures, it is miraculous in drawing and composition, but in colour something less than attractive. The mastery of every phase is complete; we cannot but admire; yet at the end of it all our power of enjoyment has not, I feel, been very fully stimulated. But however you regard this concerto I do not think you will be satisfied with Edwin Fischer's performance, which makes a cold work even colder. The orchestral part is admirably conducted, with due care for balance and the wind well to the fore; but the pianist patters along on the surface of the keyboard, merely adumbrating the themes and giving no evidence of a solid conception of the music. The recording is not particularly agreeable. At last a really successful set of the Brahms Violin Concerto! This is easily the best since the first Kreisler issue. M. Renardy is a young man, but his performance, as well as being technically secure, is warm in tone and mature in sensibility. This is not the type of work one would naturally associate with M. Münch, but his discreet handling of the score shows the breadth of his musicianship. I have seldom heard the clumsily scored opening of the Andante sound less lumpish, and in this movement especially the soloist has a beautifully tranquil legato that is deeply touching. The balance is satisfactory and the recording spacious. But, though made in the same hall, this set has not quite the dynamic range, nor the thrilling realism, of the Bartok issue, which I should place high among the best modern recordings. The Concerto for Orchestra is in itself a superb work, endlessly rich in humour and pathos and purely musical imagination. At the end of his life Bartok seemed to be rediscovering the Lisztian romanticism of his early Elegies and Rhapsodies, of the two *Images,* and of *Bluebeard's Castle.* At all events, there is little in this Concerto that could be called harmonically rebarbative, and the mysterious beauty of many passages shows an orchestral sense not inferior to

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that of Debussy or Ravel. As a virtuoso piece the work is brilliantly conceived, and in their execution of it the Concertgebouw deserve—both severally and as a whole—the very highest praise. Sir Henry Wood's elaborately carpentered and upholstered version of Handel's B flat Major Organ Concerto is not a reputable affair. The first and last movements are transposed, and the Minuet from *Berenice* is introduced as a slow movement, after the existing Minuet. Mr. Thalben-Ball plays most beautifully, and his registration is tasteful; but alas! he elects to spoil our impression of his artistry by introducing into the last movement an immense cadenza in the style of Dubois. In spite of some hefty tuttis, the scoring of which sounds most un-Handelian, the recording of this concerto is extremely well managed.

Miscellaneous Orchestral. Verdi: *Traviata*—Preludes to Acts I and 3 (Rome Augusteo Orch/De Sabata. DB6855); Tchaikovsky: *Swan Lake*—Ballet Suite (Covent Garden Orch/Rignold. C3822-3); Schubert: *Rosamunde Overture* (LSO/Krips. K2071); Saint-Saëns: *Danse Macabre* (Concertgebouw/Van Beinum. K2069); Kabalevsky: *The Comedians—Suite* (New York Phil/Kurtz. DX-1537-8).

The *Traviata* preludes are much more deeply felt music than it was once the fashion to think them. That high string harmony means the pathos of illness. Toscanini's definitive performance (HMV) expresses exactly this; the tone of the violins in his record is beautiful and steady, but *haggard*; and each Prelude has an almost painful tension at which De Sabata does not seem to have aimed. The tone of the new recording is unquestionably the more round and rich and robust of the two; but those who love the music will be prepared to sacrifice these advantages for the older and truer interpretation. The latest excerpts from *Swan Lake* (most, if not all, of them hitherto unavailable on disc), being on the whole light in texture, lend themselves to recording and are in fact strikingly well recorded. So is the new *Rosamunde* Overture, in which Herr Krips' magic touch is once more in evidence. The heavenly music is infused with warmth and light, and the balance is excellent. It is hard to discover any ground on which Saint-Saëns' *Danse Macabre* could be thought other than obvious and tame; but the performance and recording are superlatively good. Kabalevsky's *The Comedians* is a suite of high-spirited, tuneful, charmingly scored movements, not at all noisy and rumbustious, as so much Soviet music tends to be. The recording is a very neat job.

Chamber Music, Piano, and Organ Solo. Schubert: Octet in F major, Op. 166 (The Vienna Octet AK2060-5); Debussy: *La Plus que Lente* (Valse) and *Danse* (Gieseking. LX1146); Schumann: *The Prophet Bird,* and Purcell: *Minuet* (Cortot. DB1901); Liszt: *Rhapsodie Espagnole* and *Sonetto del Petrarca No.* 104 (Walter Rehberg. AK2066-7); Franck: *Chorale No.* 1 *in E major* (Marcel Dupré. AK2090-1).

A new set of the Schubert *Octet* has been badly needed for some time. Those who cherished the Lener performance will find that the Vienna Octet's rendering takes some getting used to. It is a good deal drier and the tone of the first violin appears much more reedy than Lener's. The recording allows us to hear everything with perfect distinctness, except for the Double Bass, which is not given enough weight. The performance is highly competent, cool and detached. In one of the two Debussy pieces, *La Plus que Lente,* something has gone slightly wrong with the recording: the piano tone is dead and cold. In the *Danse* (*Tarantelle Styrienne*) this fault does not appear. These pieces are lightweights, although *Danse* is florid enough in its way; but both are charming and they are played with much delicacy of touch. Save for the omission of a bass chord, important because it ought suddenly to change our view of the tonality, Cortot's playing of *The Prophet Bird* is probably just what Schumann himself would have liked. The piano tone is beautifully rendered. Walter Rehberg's performance of Liszt's *Rhapsodie Espagnole* is in good style, but it lacks the virtuoso glitter without which this kind of music loses its point. It is recorded at an unusually low level, and is dry and light on bass. The *Sonetto del Petrarca No.* 104 has been very much better recorded by Dinu Lipatti (Col.). César Franck's *Chorale No.* 1 demonstrates the fatal facility of the cathedral organist who is used to improvising voluntaries. After eight minutes of this kind of thing we begin to see the force of Debussy's irritable remark that Franck was nothing but a "modulating machine." These are admirable records; but sixteen minutes of Franck, in this mood, are twelve too many.

Vocal. Verdi: *Simon Boccanegra*—Prologue, Trio (act 2), Finale (act 1) (Soloists, Chorus and Orch Sadlers Wells/Mudie. C3824-5); Mozart: *Figaro*—"Deh vieni," and *Zauberflöte*—"Ach ich fühl's (Seefried/Philharmonia/Krips. LX1145); Bizet: *Carmen*—"Flower Song," and *Il Trovatore*—"Ah yes, thou'rt mine!" (James Johnston/Cov Garden/Mudie. DX1539); Verdi: *Rigoletto*—"Parmi veder," and Donizetti: *L'Elisir d'amore*—"Una furtiva lagrima" (Tagliavini/Orch/Dorati. DB6856); Verdi: *Un Ballo in Maschera*—"Eri tu" (Inghilleri/Philharmonia/Erede. B9712); Schubert: *Die Post* and *Der Lindenbaum* (Heinrich Schlusnus acc. Peschko. K2068); Caccini: *Amarilli,* and Bononcini: *Deh piu a me non v'ascondete* (Suzanne Danco: K2070); Verdi: *Otello*—Love Duet, Act 1 (Richard Tucker and Daniza Ilitsch/Metropolotan Opera Orch/Rudolph. LX1144).

Richard Tucker is evidently a very fine tenor indeed, in the Italian style; we should like to hear him in the flesh, at Covent Garden. Unfortunately for this record, he is partnered by a lady who sings unsteadily, and without taste or sensibility. The orchestra and the recording are excellent, but I cannot recommend this disc to lovers of the music. Of the three excerpts from Verdi's fine and sombre *Simon Boccanegra* the Trio comes through best on this occasion. The three singers are at the top of their form and the result is really thrilling. The Finale to act 1 is a slight disappointment, for here Arnold Matters is not, in his opening address, as impressive as we have heard him in the opera house. The rest of the scene goes well; it is recorded with plenty of recession and conveys a sense of the dramatic situation. Mme Seefried's "Deh vieni" is a beautiful thing, serene and tender; the balance with the orchestra is excellent. Her "Ach ich fühl's" is less good. There is a sense of strain—especially in the high notes—which spoils the pathos of this lovely aria. James Johnston's latest disc is a star. Since McCormack I have not heard the Flower Song so effortlessly and heroically sung by a Briton. The aria from *Il Trovatore* is only a little less remarkable, and both sides are capably recorded. Tagliavini's disc is stated to be "by permission of C.E.T.R.A." It has the faults of so many American recordings—harshness and bad balance. In fact it is a pity HMV could not have imported the Italian matrices, for the Italian recording of these arias (differently coupled, incidentally) is far superior to this one. The singer would appear to be about the best Italian tenor of today. I cannot recommend Signor Inghilleri's disc; it is very crude in style and the enormous gasp on side 2 has a purely comic effect. Apart from a certain breathiness, which I attribute to his being placed too near the mike, Heinrich Schlusnus' record has distinction. The beautiful quality of his voice strikes one at once, and the piano part is extremely well played. On the other hand, *Die Post* is taken too slowly, and in neither of these songs does one get the impression that Herr Schlusnus is interested in the meaning of the words. Mlle Danco's cool, precise voice shows at its best in the Bononcini song, where the runs are particularly beautiful. I have heard "Amarilli" sung with more charm, but seldom with better control of the line.

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